

IEEE-IAB Student Feedback Session **October 13, 2011**

One of the key goals of the Texas Tech ECE Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) is to promote an ongoing, constructive dialog among students, faculty, and staff. For many years, the IAB has hosted an annual students-only, friendly forum to solicit feedback from the ECE student body. The IAB then works with the ECE faculty to address concerns, as well as pass along positive comments.

This Fall, nine members of the IAB met with students on the Thursday evening of our on-campus visit. Due to logistical problems, the student turnout was smaller than usual – about 20 students. However, the more intimate setting had the positive effect of promoting more open dialog. Here's what we heard:

ISSUES - LABS, COMPUTERS & EQUIPMENT

1. Have to close computer down, log out etc, even when going to bathroom...is there any way to relax the security standard?

There is no way to preserve security of the student's personal information, eraidr accounts, etc. if the computers remain on when students are not present at the computers

2. Have the department provide MatLab, Mathematica or other needed software, so that students can install on their personal laptops. Note -- IAB advised students to seek ways to communicate effectively so that helpful information is spread (example: University has purchased a site license for MatLab, but not everyone knew about it).

Matlab is now provided by the university to students and faculty. We recommend that students check eraidr for available software, as the university updates this on a regular basis. We are not aware of any faculty using mathematica in the department. There are free viewers for mathematica available online. The college is updating the computer systems so that they are uniform throughout the college. We have given them a list of all of the software that we are using in the department.

3. Need more hours open on the weekend for the labs, almost universal experience with building doors not opened up when it should be.

4. Policy for late night lab use not clear...lab posted to be open until 12 midnight, but building doors locked at 10pm and won't be opened by cleaning staff. So students can't leave the lab late or they can't get back in.

For 3 and 4, the teaching assistants will be required to sit in a room with a phone or to provide students with their cell phone numbers. If the outside doors are locked, then students should have a number to call and the graduate student will come and let them in.

5. Need more hours on stockroom as well. Stockroom posted hour's also unreliable, especially opening time at 10am (often not open until 11-11:30am). Also bathroom 10 minute breaks have been known to take over 30 min.

Students need the cell phone number of a point of contact to call if the stockroom is closed during posted open hours. Should we have a sign posted: Call xxx-xxxx if this room is locked during open hours?

6. Need more stock of common low-cost parts (consumables)...resistors, capacitors, etc.

More funds from course fees are now available.

7. Need bits for the circuit board milling machine, or some efficient way to access bits instead of having to buy bits.

More funds from course fees are now available.

8. TA's have said that they would like whiteboards rather than chalkboards.

I think this is happening, but will check

9. Xilinx software needs to be updated. Note -- IAB advised them to contact IT support: still Tom Heisey? Maybe students need to be reminded who to contact with computer/software problems?

College has taken over IT. We will ask the college IT people what is the appropriate means of communicating student needs.

10. (During the IAB-women's lunch Thursday) toilet seat covers needed!

I don't think these are used anywhere on campus. Can ask Jackie to contact building maintenance.

ISSUES – CURRICULA & FACULTY

11. From multiple students: Professor Dr. X mumbles with accent, and handwriting is illegible. Students do note that he is helpful during office hours. Note -- IAB advised students to work together to put some understanding together after each class and to communicate their issues with the professor.

Chairman will talk to this faculty member about using a microphone during class. Also, TA could be assigned to put together powerpoint slides or word document of this faculty member's notes.

12. More classes are being scheduled in other buildings, like EE classes in the CE building, why not more EE classes in the EE building? Also CE classes are now in the EE building. Only 10 minutes between classes...

Faculty are also very unhappy as many of us are having to teach in other buildings. The department no longer has control over scheduling classes in our own building.

13. Classes being split because of high number of students, and students don't get the professor that they wanted.

The department tries to be as fair as possible in randomizing how students are assigned when classes have to be split.

14. Grading practices are a concern in Dr. Y's class: Two tests and student gets the worst of the two major tests, OR gets the Final test grade if better. Grading practice is explained well at the beginning of the course, but it is intimidating and seems a very unusual approach. Homework is not graded, but does give feedback to students and posts solutions.

The chairman has spoken with this faculty member and is assured that the grading policy will be implemented in a fair and reasonable manner. The test policy was also implemented to assure that students learn all the material since the final was optional from the beginning.

15. Differential Equations I and II classes are still taught in Math department, makes it hard when students get into Linear Systems. Need to see more practical/EE applications for the theory.

We have very little control over what the math department teaches. We do try to communicate with them on a regular basis. Because of university wide committees that approve curriculum and limited faculty in the department, it is impractical for the ECE department to take over teaching the math courses.

16. Drs. X and Y in Math department were good Diff Eq teachers, but not Dr. Z. Also complaint that the Math classes didn't say in advance who the teacher would be, all TBA.

See above answer to #15.

17. Complaints from transfer students from UT and South Plains (Dif Eq class!) that courses only transferred as electives. South Plains especially has a Matriculation agreement? Students at South Plains were told that the classes would transfer.

This is a state-wide problem. Just because classes transfer does not mean they will count toward the degree. The community colleges change advising staff frequently. We recommend that all community college students look at the TTU catalog and degree plan

to work with their advisors in making the best choices. We are also always available to talk to community college students about the best classes for them to take.

18. Students dislike uncivil remarks between faculty members.

The chairman will remind faculty in an upcoming faculty meeting to remember to speak to and about one another in a civil manner.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

19. Availability of professors is great! Doors are open. Calls are even answered at 3 am. (Dr. Bayne was cited as “going above and beyond”).

20. Computer Labs are updated and students can work with new software! (Transfer from UT noted that the UT computer lab was still using Windows 2000). Computer Network works well.

21. Very high approval of Tracy Bouffard as advisor and communicator! Students felt she is one of the very best at Texas Tech. Some concern over her workload with increasing undergraduate enrollment.

22. Professors really support student organizations!

23. Janet McKelvey and Jackie Charlebois are very helpful and really care.

24. New soldering stations are very nice.

25. Shelli Crockett and the WCOE Engineering Opportunities Center are doing a great job assisting with intern and job placement help.

26. Many good comments from transfer students how much better the professors and labs are at TTU!

27. Overall, students were very positive and feel that they are getting a good education!