

Engineering Students' Forum
Sponsored by the SAE student chapter
21 November, 2005 - Noon to 1 pm in ET 131

Present: Dr. Carlos Pomalaza-Ráez - Chair of the Department of Engineering;
Twenty engineering students

Moderator: Frank McDougall, mechanical engineering student and SAE President

Summary

Dr. Ráez thanked the SAE student chapter, in particular its president Frank McDougall, for making the arrangements for this Forum, for taking the role of Forum moderator and for bringing the pizza and drinks. Dr. Ráez did not know why Dr. Voland was not able to attend the Forum.

The following issues were brought forward by the students:

- **Open computer labs**
Students feel that there are too many periods when these labs are unavailable because they are being used for lectures. Dr. Ráez acknowledges that at the present there is no dedicated "open computer lab" for engineering students. This is a desirable goal. In the meantime students that need to access computer labs for extended periods of time can request to the Department of Engineering to have their names submitted to the campus Police and Safety office, so they can then use the engineering labs seven days a week, twenty four hours a day (whenever there are no lectures taking place). Dr. Ráez mentioned that all the software in ET 315 is available in ET 104 and that Matlab and its application tools are also available in ET 244. ET 104 is open on Sunday afternoons and ET 244 is open daily between 4:30-6:00 pm, a time period when ET 315 and ET 104 are being used with lectures.
- **The "collaboratory" room**
A student asked about the possibility of using this room for the senior design teams to meet and brainstorm their ideas. Students clearly remember that in the past they were told that such use was going to be allowed in this room. Students strongly feel that a long time has gone by, almost two years, and the room so far is closed up most of the time, and when it is in use, it is mainly by people who are not students, faculty, or staff from the School of ETCS. Dr. Ráez will bring this issue to the dean's attention. He added that he and the engineering faculty also feel that this room should be put to use by ETCS students and faculty as soon as possible.
- **Room for use by the student chapters of the professional societies**
Students mentioned that that availability of such a room has been promised in the past. It was promised that this room would become a reality during this academic year. They feel that the promise has not been followed up. Dr. Ráez will bring this issue to the dean's attention. Dr. Ráez has raised the same issue at meetings with the dean and the other departments' chairs.

- **Rooms for senior design projects**
 Students raised the subject of having more space for work related to senior design projects. They feel that the only room they have right now is ET 331, which originally was labeled as a room for electrical engineering research projects. Next semester they are supposed to start building their projects and they do not have anywhere to leave tools or materials so they do not have to take them home every day. Dr. Ráez mentioned that another lab, originally labeled as a mechanical research lab will become available next semester. He acknowledges that this is a stop gap measure and that long term needs for space for senior design projects have to be addressed very soon, since enrollments in all the engineering programs are increasing.
- **Higher Grounds Coffee Kiosk**
 A student asked if a request could be made to move the Higher Grounds Kiosk out of the building so more space becomes available for studying in the lobby. Dr. Ráez indicated that the world is divided between those who like coffee and those who do not. Most likely this request will not attract enough support to justify the move.
- **Quality of the lighting in the ET building lobby**
 Students asked if something can be done about the poor lighting of the lobby. It makes it very difficult for reading and working on course assignments. Dr. Ráez believes that this should be easy to fix and will make a request to do so.
- **Whom to bring issues (complaints) about engineering faculty**
 Students wanted to know what procedure to follow if they want to bring issues about behavior or performance of engineering faculty. Dr. Ráez mentioned that these issues can be brought first to his attention. If the issue is about Dr. Ráez's performance or behavior it can be brought to the attention of the dean of the school. If the faculty involved is the dean of the School of ETCS then the issue can be brought directly to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Dr. Susan Hannah.
- **Guidelines for using the machine shop in the first floor**
 Students are concerned about the current and possible future restrictions on the use of the machine shop. Current guidelines allow the use of the shop during Friday afternoons. Students feel this period is too limited for the scope of the senior design projects. Certain stages of project implementation might require much longer periods of time and for several times during a week. Students are also concerned that the already restrictive use might become worse when the new mechanical engineering manager takes over the administration of the machine shop. Dr. Ráez will bring this issue to the dean's office. He does not see any reason why the use of the shop cannot be more liberal (in the amount of hours) for the case of senior design projects.