I think that we were all glad to see the end of the Spring 2020 semester. While the EECE faculty and staff would have preferred to return to the traditional instructional mode and be in the same room with our students, we recognize that your health and safety is paramount, which is the reason why the CSU System has decided that as many courses as possible at the 23 CSU campuses will be offered online in Fall 2020. This means that almost all of the EECE courses in Fall 2020 will be offered online rather than face-to-face. Room assignments have been replaced with WWW ONLINE in the Fall 2020 timetable. As you will see, online courses include the activity and lab sections of our Linear Circuits I (EECE 211L), Electronics I (EECE 315), Computer Architecture Performance and Implementation (EECE 343), and Introduction to Computer Networks and Network Management (EECE/CSCI 446) courses. Be prepared to meet with your classmates and your EECE course instructor virtually on the days and times posted in the schedule.

Your EECE faculty are working to make the online instruction in Fall 2020 a learning experience that is equal to the experience you would have had if the courses were taught face-to-face on campus. We know that we must maintain the critical elements of our Chico State programs that support our Program Educational Objectives. Our Program Educational Objectives have been vetted by our EECE Industrial Advisory Board, which includes senior engineers from companies in CA, as well as some of our recent graduates. Our program educational objectives are expectations that you will attain shortly after graduation and are posted on the B.S. in Computer Engineering and B.S. in Electrical/Electronic Engineering webpages.

Our activities, labs, and class projects are distributed throughout our curriculum so that you are prepared to meet these expectations as you enter the workforce. The fact that the Fall 2020 activity and lab sections will not be held face-to-face on campus does not mean that you will not receive the same practical learning that students in previous years have gained. We know that employers of our graduates from the Computer Engineering and Electrical/Electronic Engineering programs at CSU Chico recognize the unique skillset that our students gain from the experiments, which is why some of these employers only recruit our students and do not go elsewhere. Our faculty know that the experiments conducted in these activity and lab sections support your learning of the material taught in the lecture component of these courses. We also know that seeing the results of your designs that you have constructed and characterized can be deeply satisfying to you. Therefore, we are working to ensure that you continue to have this opportunity in an online format.

In EECE 211L and EECE 315, we will ask you to design, simulate, build, and test linear and electronic circuits at home. In EECE 237 and EECE 344, we will ask you to design, program, build, and test embedded systems. The EECE department is prepared to loan our students in EECE 211L, EECE 315, and EECE 344 portable electronic instruments that are oscilloscopes, power supplies, arbitrary function generators, and digital logic analyzers, similar to the ones that some of you have already used in EECE 144 and EECE 211L. Since CSU Chico has requested that students minimize the time that they spend on campus, the IEEE Student Branch will not be able to distribute parts at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. Instead, students will be expected to purchase parts kits from a local electronics company that will ship the kit directly to you. Links to the company along with a list of the components needed for each course, should you would wish to source them yourself, should be emailed to you by the beginning of July.

Unfortunately, some of the hardware that is required to perform the experiments using real systems is so expensive that the department cannot afford to provide hands-on experiences to all students in each lab and activity section. Instead, the faculty in EECE 343 and EECE 446 are developing experiments that will enhance your ability to write test benches, analyze system performance using simulation tools, and interact with virtualized systems. These skills are of increasing importance to companies in the computer engineering field.

But, you won't have to do these experiments alone. Your faculty are working over the summer to create tutorials, videos as well as detailed supporting documents, to help you tackle some of the challenges in the experiment. Your faculty will also be available online during the scheduled lab and activity sections as well as during their regularly scheduled office hours. We will work with CSU Chico to create virtual study groups. We hope to offer online tutoring support as well and will email everyone in our courses when the support is available.

Feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions as you review your planned courses for Fall 2020. Email is best – kmeehan@csuchico.edu. If you would like to talk with me, send me a few days and times when you are available and I will be back in touch with a Zoom link. Dr. Hadil Mustafa (hmustafa@csuchico.edu) and Dr. Zhaohong Wang (zwang25@csuchico.edu) are available to discuss questions that you may have about EECE 344 and EECE/CSCI 446, respectively.

Take care.

Kathleen along with all of the EECE faculty and staff

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