November 9, 2007

This week began with major reconsiderations of original project goals and objectives. It was unfortunate that such drastic changes had to take place late during the semester, but for optimal completion of the design, it was the necessary means for which the project had to be accomplished properly. I only wish that I would have been made aware sooner of how our project could have been better optimized so that these last minute shenanigans could have been avoided. Unfortunately, this is just not the way the events played out, and we are in the situation which we are currently in. Major changes have been made to the project within the last week, all which need more time and money to accommodate for. Deadline can only be reached if the changes we made can be accomplished quickly, and due to certain obstacles placed in our way, that is becoming increasingly more challenging.

The first main obstacle in our way is the 12-V AC relay. The responsibility for the flaw in the setup of this design resides squarely on my shoulders as well. The 120 V AC pump which we use is not ideally compatible with the setup which the rest of the apparatus goes with. An AC pump requires AC voltage and AC current. The rest of the system all uses DC inputs in quantities of 12V, 8V, and 5V. Therefore, it would be much simpler to have everything compatible with DC voltage, rather than having one special piece requiring a relay which is different than all the other parts which are components of the project. Because of this, with only 2 weeks to go, our group as chosen to take this element of the project and manage it by a completely different direction. An 8 Volt DC pump was ordered on the previous Friday which is going to be used as opposed to the 120 V AC pump which ran on relay. What this means is that we have to wait on the new part to come in, and then set up voltage apparatus for it to function correctly when it finally does get here. Also, it means that we have to wait for the new pump to arrive before we can proceed on other goals for the project. Furthermore, this means we must alter the design to our PCB board as well, which is a stressing itinerary since it is so close to deadline.

One aim of this past week was to hook up the force transducer to the lever set up. Unfortunately, this aim was unreached since the force transducer, which was supposed to be put on rush delivery 2 weeks ago, has not arrived yet, and is thus delaying the process of understanding it electronically, and then hooking it up together with the force lever arm system. This will only delay us further in the completion of this project since both these tasks will need to be accomplished by next Friday. It is not an insurmountable task, however the added worry and fear it created was ultimately unnecessary. I believe that in retrospect, proper planning and more cautious decision making could have prevented both these problems from occurring. If the group had a better direction from day one, these last minute issues would not have come to rise and roost problems for us in the final week.

One task this week that was successfully accomplished this week was the attainment of a frog gastrocnemius muscle. The muscle was attained by contact of Penny Dobbins who had initially promised for us to deliver 2 frog’s muscles for the
purposes of our testing. This came to prove true earlier this week as she has stuck to her
word and will deliver us a test specimen so that we may test our device once it is built.

Group dynamics took a turn for the worse this week. I believe that the additional
stress of the approach of the due date has made the three of us testy, and that ordinary day
of day human issues which results in change of schedule have become more and more
irritating between the three of us. Because of this group feeling is extremely weak, and
we are no longer properly cooperating. It is for this reason that these assignments have
not been posted online in a timely manner, and have become an issue of concern for my
advisors.