In light of the difficulty that we had with the proposed 518 laboratory I have decided to change the way in which I will evaluate your performance in the class.

Instead of considering the homework, the mid-term exam, the final exam, and the laboratory, I am going to base my evaluation only on the homework and two exams. The reason for this is that it took me too long to get the laboratory assignment to you so that you had a reasonable amount of time to complete it given the weight that it carried in my original evaluation plan.

I apologize that I was not able to offer you a laboratory experience in a way that would allow you to complete the laboratory in time for a fair evaluation. However, the laboratory data is now available on the course website. If you still wish to have that learning experience, I encourage you to complete the laboratory. If you choose to do this, I will take the time to give you feedback so that you can still learn more about how a real microwave radiometer works. You may choose to do this informally. For example, only produce a collection of figures and short analysis instead of taking the time to integrate and organize everything together into a longer written document. Let me know if this option appeals to you and we can set up a time to meet and compare what you have found with what I found.

This change in the evaluation plan necessarily changes the mix of experiences that will be used in my evaluation of your performance. Some experiences require immediate responses (exams) by the individual (exams, homework, laboratories). Others allow longer periods of time for the student to respond to questions and perhaps use feedback from the teacher or fellow classmates to improve the response (homework, laboratories). The original evaluation plan weighted homework, the mid-term exam, the final exam, and the laboratory equally. In reality, these four experiences reflect a mixture of the immediate and individual responses along with the longer-period and perhaps group-aided responses that is not exactly clear.

As a result, I will not announce a set split on the percentage weight that I will use in my evaluation of your performance (i.e. 33% homework, 33% mid-term, 33% final; or 50% homework, 25% mid-term, 25% final; or 25% homework, 35% mid-term, 40% final; etc.) but I will consider a variety of weightings and look for a consistent pattern that allows me to fairly separate the performance of the students in the class into appropriate grade classifications. In any case, the final exam will be a significant fraction of my overall evaluation of your performance, so prepare appropriately.