Lab Reports: Common Mistakes

Listed below are some common mistakes observed in evaluating the Lab Reports. Not everyone made these mistakes nor do they encompass all the errors from all the reports; they are occurred in more than one report.

Figures and Tables
We still received some reports with figures and tables without appropriate captions or without correct cross-references in the text. Please re-read (and follow) the guidelines on the course webpage titled “Using figures and tables” at...
http://www4.eng.hawaii.edu/~bsb/me402/writing_references.html
These guidelines are meant to take the guesswork out of preparing and formating your reports.

Units and Numbers
If you report a numerical value it should have units. I can think of only rare occasions where this rule does not apply. If you report a non-dimensional number (R^2 for example) you might even note that it is non-dimensional so that it is clear you are intentionally not reporting units.

There should be a space between numerical values and their units.

When reporting numerical values less than 1.0, use a leading zero.

Please review the guidelines on the course webpage (same link as above) titled “Using numbers in text”

Organization
Your report should include sections to organize the content. Each section should have descriptive words demarcating the section. You should not copy-and-paste the lab assignment as the section heading; the lab directions are meant to be a guide to help you organize your report.

You should include your name on any report you submit.

Your report should include short (a few sentences is fine) introduction and conclusion sections.

Procedure Versus Results
For ME 402 your lab reports do not need to detail the procedure of the experiment. Instead, spend your efforts in analyzing the results and describing what you observed.