COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

February 23, 2007

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Marilyn Davies, Rick Rabbitt, JoAnn Lighty, Paul Tikalsky, Marc Bodson, Anil Virkar, Dent Udell, Tom Henderson (SofC), Terry Ring, Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen

Excused: Martin Berzins, (SofC)

Dean Brown welcomed Tom Henderson to the meeting as a representative from the School of Computing.

Announcements/Updates

Dean Brown extended “Congratulations to our friend Anil Virkar for bringing great honor to the College and MSE for being elected to the National Academy of Engineering”.

NRC Faculty Study

The NRC (National Research Council) Study is the most important study we participate in. The study is designed to: help universities improve the quality of their research doctorate programs through benchmarking; provide potential students and the public with accessible, readily available information on doctoral programs nationwide; and enhance the nation’s overall research capacity. NRC spends a lot of time deciding what data is really correlated to a strong engineering program. This study gives the answer to that question. All of the department statistics have been submitted; hopefully, we had good faculty representation on the faculty survey, the details of which are most important to NRC. The faculty surveys must be turned in soon.

Warnock Building

Dean Brown thanked everyone, and especially Marilyn Davies who orchestrated the entire event, for the wonderful building dedication last Friday, February 16. It was a great day to be an engineer at the U. There are a few more weeks of work on the first and second floors and a few more months of work on the third and fourth floors. We will occupy the building as soon as the final punch list items are finished.

The question was raised about the use of the boardroom. Marilyn Davies commented that the boardroom will be the permanent home of the College ENAC and IAB. It will also be available for College users at no charge, for now. However, a fee will be charged for other entities on campus. An on-line reservation form will be created. Sarah Bagdoian will be responsible for scheduling the room. Discretion will be used as to the type of event held in the boardroom. Dean Brown commented that the Warnock
Engineering Building is for the entire College and we hope to have many opportunities to make use of this wonderful facility.

The large classrooms and seminar rooms will be scheduled through University Scheduling and we will try to keep them filled with engineering classes. Initially, an announcement will be made to students regarding the availability, first come first serve, of the study rooms, which accommodate 6-8 students. A system for scheduling the study rooms may need to be created.

Dianne Leonard, College Academic Advisor, is working on creating an engineering tutoring program which will start Fall 2007. A student will be hired this summer to organize the program. Honors students and students from professional societies that require service hours from their members will serve as mentors. The program will start by focusing on math, physics, and the common lower level courses, then expand to beginning courses in each department. This program will contribute to retention and provide a sense of community, which we want in the College. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to send him any advice on how they feel this program should operate.

USTAR Building
Dean Brown reported that he, Rick Rabbitt, Jerry Stringfellow and Patrick Tresco have been involved in meetings for the past several months regarding the USTAR Building. The architects have been selected for the programming phase, which is currently underway. It is quite likely that the building will be located across the street from engineering on Central Campus Drive.

Legislative Update
Dean Brown commented that the media reports that a 3 ½% raise is in the works with another 1 ½% for retention or discretionary purposes. We will not know for sure until we receive the official budget letter. There have been very positive meetings with legislators the past month and at this point we are confident that the Engineering Initiative will be funded. The legislative analyst has recommended $5M ongoing and $4M one time. If these amounts were funded, the Engineering Initiative would end, but if not, it may continue for another year.

FAR Database
The web interface for entering FAR information should be ready sometime next week. Part of the reason for the delay is gathering information to prepopulate the form which in turn will make it easier for the faculty. The due date will be pushed back a little. Dean Brown will send an e-mail announcement to all faculty once the system is ready for use.

RPT Guidelines
In response to a request by President Young, Dave Pershing and Lorris Betz discussed RPT at a recent CAD meeting. Susan Olson asked that the discussion be delivered to the faculty as well. She is concerned that the individual faculty members aren’t going to know what is being driven from the top regarding RPT. Dave Pershing emphasized the importance of the dean’s role in RPT decisions. The dean’s letter should discuss his/her
analysis of the case rather than just repeat what is in the other letters. It is critical to look at each case fairly. The system at the U seems to favor the candidate; the dean must look out for the institution as well. If the case comes to the dean with unresolved issues it should be sent back to the department for further review and resolution. If the faculty is divided on a case, that is a red flag. Dave Pershing felt that the right attitude was expressed in the phrase, “If in doubt, don’t.” A member of CAD said that the external reviewers’ letters are almost always positive, so we need to read between the lines. President Young is very thoughtful about the tenure cases. The U is the only institution in the state that doesn’t basically tenure everybody. It must be clear that tenure is something that has to be earned. The new PPM rules require informal annual reviews for every untenured faculty member, which provides opportunities to council together and assess the faculty member’s progress. Five of the departments have met to discuss the proposed College RPT Guidelines and have voted as follows:

CVE unanimously in favor
MSE unanimously in favor
ME unanimously in favor, 3 abstained
ECE 15 yes, 1 no, 5 abstained
ChE waiting for a couple e-mail vote but now it standings 10 yes, 3 no, 1 abstained

BIO and SoC faculty meetings are scheduled in the next couple of weeks. Once their votes are in, the College RPT Guidelines will be sent to Susan Olson for review and submission to the University RPT Standards Committee for approval. It is our intention to use the new guidelines this coming year.

Rick Rabbit asked if the new guidelines are approved how will they affect those that are perhaps grandfathered. Dean Brown commented that the faculty member could elect to come up in the 7th year; it is their choice. The other new rules will apply to everyone.

University Identity and Branding
At President Young’s retreat in November he emphasized the imperative for a more coordinated and consistent brand identity across campus. The basic idea is the institution and constituents benefit if there is a clear image. President Young received several brochures from across campus and it took him several minutes to identify that they were actually from the U. A copy of the SoC annual report was distributed to the Committee members. It was clear that it was a University publication because The University of Utah, School of Computing was printed at the top of every page.

President Young is asking for renewed emphasis on using the University’s approved logo for the U, which can be found on Printing Services website. The University’s website has a new look. President Young urged all University entities to move to this visual and stylistic identity. He has instructed University Marketing & Communications to provide entities across campus with materials needed to reach this goal. Not everyone on the Executive Committee was thrilled with the new look of the U’s homepage. There is a link in the bottom right-hand corner on the new homepage asking for feedback on the new look. Dean Brown commented that we are not asked to make instantaneous changes,
and that it would be helpful to the web developers to hear feedback from users. He asked the chairs to read President Young’s memo (copy included with the agenda) and take the information back to their departments. It should be clear that the College of Engineering identity is connected to the University. We all benefit if good things are connected to the U.

College Climate – Course Evaluation Questions
At the January Executive Committee Meeting, there was a discussion about possibly adding questions addressing college climate to the course evaluations. After discussion by e-mail, Kent Udell proposed that we boil it down to one question: “The instructor treated the students with respect.” Martin Berzins suggested, “The students treated the instructor with respect.” After discussion, it was felt that another question be added “The students treated each other with respect.” It was agreed that all three questions should be added to the Course Evaluations.

Research - OSP
Patrick Tresco stated that he has been hearing of problems engineering faculty have had with OSP. If faculty have specific problems, they should send Patrick a report with the details, so that he can advocate for them. He asked the chairs to ask faculty to send e-mail reports directly to him.

Outstanding College Teacher, TA, Technical Staff Nominations
Nominations for outstanding teacher, TA, and tech staff are due March 15. Dean Brown encouraged the chairs/director to think of people in their departments who deserve this recognition.

Senate Nominations
Sandy Bruhn reported that three of our faculty (Dan Adams, Sandy Meek, Mikhail Skliar) will rotate off the senate this year and need to be replaced. Marc Bodson will be going on sabbatical and Kuan Chen, professor in ME, will take his place. Richard Brown and Mike Kirby will continue to serve. SoC and ME are represented so it would be good if there was representation from the other departments. JoAnn Lighty commented that ChE is working on a nomination; Anil Virkar is also working on a nomination from MSE.

Dean Brown thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their great work.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.