COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

April 20, 2007

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Marilyn Davies, Rob MacLeod (BIO), JoAnn Lighty, Paul Tikalsky, Marc Bodson, Anil Virkar, Kent Udell, Martin Berzins, Terry Ring, Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen

Excused: Patrick Tresco, Michael Kay, Rick Rabbitt (BIO)

Announcements/Updates

Dean Brown gave a health report on two members of the dean’s office:

Patrick Tresco was in a biking accident a week ago and broke his arm, which required surgery. He is now sporting 7 screws and 2 plates. Rod Mitchell has an unexplained swollen foot. Originally it was diagnosed as a sprain but it is not sprained or broken and tests are being done to determine the cause.

Dean Brown announced that Anil Virkar has been named Distinguished Professor of Materials Science and Engineering. We are very pleased and proud of Anil.

Dean Brown welcomed Rob MacLeod to the meeting, representing Rick Rabbitt from BIO.

Approval of College RPT Policy

The College RPT policy has been officially approved by the University Standards Committee. Dean Brown invited the chairs to nominate faculty to serve on the College RPT Advisory Committee. Faculty can also self-nominate. It would be desirable to have strong, elder statesmen serving on this Committee. The School of Computing and Bioengineering RPT guidelines, which are consistent on the major policy and procedures points with the College RPT guidelines, should be presented to the University Standards Committee in May for approval. Dean Brown will send an electronic version of the approved College policy to the Chairs.

New Academic Calendar/ Faculty Retreats

There has been discussion on how the new academic calendar affects faculty retreats. In April 2006, Dave Pershing, SVP for Academic Affairs, sent a memo to Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs indicating that there should be only 2 working days prior to the beginning of Fall 2007 semester classes. This guideline is the result of an agreement between the University of Utah and the federal government to ensure compliance with federally funded research guidelines. On April 18, Dean Brown sent an e-mail to the chairs outlining what Dave Pershing agreed to so that we remain in compliance this year. A copy of the e-mail was included with the agenda. We believe that faculty retreats fall
under the de minimis rule described in the newly approved University Effort Reporting Policy, but by complying with VP Pershing’s directions, we will be safe in any case.

**Move to Warnock Engineering Building**

The dean’s office will be moving to the Warnock Engineering Building starting April 23. Several events have already been held in the new building: The President’s National Advisory Council, and an SRC research review hosted by Chris Myers. We want the building to be used; it can be a big asset for all of us. Classes will be held in Warnock beginning Summer 2007.

Marilyn Davies mentioned that the first floor wall by the classrooms will have changeable displays that could be used to highlight research from each department. All the chairs agreed that they would like to participate in the displays.

The café, Starley Commons, will be run by Brandon Howard of The Point Restaurant. All the food will be pre-made; there are microwave ovens available to heat the food.

**Convocation**

Sandy Bruhn reported that the College convocation this year begins at 11:15 am. The Chairs were asked to arrive by 10:45 as the procession will begin at 11:00. Sandy will send an e-mail to all faculty regarding the 10:45 arrival time.

**Scholarship Selection Process**

Sandy Bruhn reported that the College Scholarship Committee is made up of one representative from each department, either assigned or elected. When it is time to award the scholarship, the Committee members receive a copy of each completed application. The Committee then meets to review, discuss, and rate each application. Each department representative has the opportunity to give their input. The selection process is a very fair way of evaluating recipients of the scholarships.

This is the first year so many Brown Fellowships have been declined. It may be time to reevaluate the scholarship amount offered to ensure we are competitive with other institutions across the country. Dean Brown commented that in general, faculty have to be able to make a five year commitment of support to students, otherwise we will not attract the best students.

**Discussion Items**

**Crisis Control**

In light of the Virginia Tech tragedy, crisis control was discussed. It is important that faculty, staff, and students be alert and take appropriate action if someone or something seems out of the ordinary. How do we alert everyone of an emergency? There will be flat-panel monitors in Warnock and later in the other engineering buildings that could be used as an alert system. Emergency response will continue to be discussed at the College level. University administration is planning a public safety campaign to address the many kinds of crises.
Report on Engineering Deans Institute
Dean Brown attended the Engineering Deans Institute April 16-19 and mentioned a couple of items. Every discipline has its own meetings for department chairs. Hopefully, we are represented at each of those meetings. A big part of a chair’s job is to be an ambassador for their department. The department level ranking is based 100% on the opinion of the other schools’ department chairs. Dean Brown asked the chairs to attend meetings specific to their department, to be an active participant, and to promote their department. Every opportunity should be taken to share all that is good at the U and in the College. It will have some affect on what other chairs/deans remember and how they mark the boxes on the surveys they complete.

Paul Tikalsky commented on a new ranking system coming out using data from the National Science Foundation, the National Research Council, and the National Center for Education Statistics. The rankings are of nearly 6000 graduate programs at 418 universities. It is a quantitative evaluation. He will send the url for this new ranking to the chairs.

Peer Group for ASEE Salary Survey
In January, the College participated in the ASEE Salary Survey. We can access results from those institutions that participated once peer groups have been defined. The chairs will be asked for input on how we should define our peer groups.

Faculty Mentoring and Development
Feedback - The process of faculty performance valuation, merit raises, etc. is underway and Dean Brown reminded the chairs how vitally important it is to give feedback to their faculty. Meetings with faculty may be held before or after notice of finalized raises is received from Dave Pershing. Some chairs may prefer to separate the raise information from the performance evaluation. Compliment faculty on their strengths and also suggest to them where they could make improvement. Dean Brown asked chairs to visit one-on-one with every faculty member at least once a year.

Awards – Dean Brown recommended that chairs look out for faculty members in terms of receiving awards, which is great PR for the College. Some departments recognize their own faculty; there are also College, University, and National awards. Being aware of award notices and preparing nomination packets would be a wonderful role for a senior faculty member in each department.

Student Retention
Introductory Courses - Dean Brown commented that he has received some worrisome information regarding our students. The Living and Learning Center has been a positive experience for our students; however, he has heard that some of these students (most of whom are Engineering Honors students) are now thinking about leaving engineering. In their first year, they did not feel engineering gave them many opportunities for creative thinking. One thing we need to emphasize in beginning courses is that engineering is improving the quality of life for humankind. Our students should receive opportunities
for community service. Students in the Living and Learning Center will be interviewed to gather factual information.

Dean Brown is concerned that the growth in graduates has plateaued and that the number of incoming students has declined in some departments. Students from community colleges seem to be entering the workforce rather than transferring to the U to pursue BS degrees. Retention of students who do start in engineering is the most effective way to graduate more students. Funding from the Engineering Initiative has been directly tied to the number of graduates. A decline in the number of graduates would affect future funding.

Martin Berzins commented that School of Computing receives a lot of complaints from students about their math courses. They feel math is not taught in a way that matches the language they want to learn and understand. Most of the departments in engineering have professors who could bring math closer to their students. A program will be rolled out in Fall Semester to have upper-division Engineering students tutor freshmen in these basic courses.

Advising – Dean Brown reported that he has heard that in some departments advising is very rigid. After discussion it was decided to invite Dianne Leonard, College Academic Advisor, to attend the next Executive Committee Meeting to discuss advising.

International Center
Rob MacLeod reported that Bioengineering has been having problems with the timely handling of matters by the International Center. Dean Brown asked Rob to send him details of the problems they have been experiencing and he will follow-up with the International Center.

Dean Brown thanked everyone for their good work.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.