COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
May 18, 2007

MINUTES

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Parick Tresco, Michael Kay, Rick Rabbitt, Geoff Silcox (ChE), Paul Tikalsky, Marc Bodson, Feng Liu (MSE), Kent Udell, Martin Berzins, Terry Ring, Vicki Jensen

Dianne Leonard, College of Engineering Academic Advisor

Excused: Marilyn Davies, JoAnn Lighty, Anil Virkar, Sandy Bruhn

Announcements/Updates

• Dean Brown welcomed Geoff Silcox (representing JoAnn Lighty from ChE) and Feng Liu (representing Anil Virkar from MSE) to the meeting.

• The University has arranged for faculty to participate in TIAA/CREF’s Socially Responsible Investment portfolio. Potential donors who feel strongly about their funds being invested in a socially responsible way can have their money invested in this portfolio rather than in the U’s own endowment pool. In such cases, U would not take its usual skim for managing the endowment.

• The University received a letter asking whether we would like to participate with the government of Saudi Arabia in their offering the King Abdullah Scholarship to students who would attend here. The program provides 15,000 scholarships at all levels in the US and 3,000 in Asian nations. The scholarships are for scientific specializations, especially medicine, engineering, computer science, mathematics and physics. The students would come with a full funding. None of the committee members saw any down side to us taking these graduate students. Dean Brown will convey to John Francis the sentiment of the group.

• Beginning late this summer, President Young will invite faculty from across campus to join him for lunch (groups of 10 to 12 at each luncheon).

• Dave Pershing, SVP for Academic Affairs, has a meeting with President Young on May 21 to finalize the budget process. By May 25 budget letters from the Dean’s Office should be sent to the departments. Faculty, including deans and chairs, must submit a FAR to receive a raise.

• When putting forward proposals for changes in degree programs or certificates, all faculty members should have an opportunity to give input. It should be made a topic of discussion at a faculty meeting. It was suggested to include at the bottom of the proposal the process followed and the date it was voted on.
• The U will be starting a major paper recycling program. This past year, the trash in three campus buildings was analyzed (what is recyclable, what is cost-effective, etc.). In a few weeks every office across campus will have a recycle container. Only white paper will be recycled in the offices. Bins will be located in other areas for mixed paper.

• Dave Pershing talked in CAD meeting about the importance of academic freedom. The University vigorously defends academic freedom, which is the freedom to choose topics to explore in one’s research area and to publish the findings, whether they are popular or not. It is, however, important that faculty not confuse academic freedom with trying to influence their students with their own political views. In most areas of the University, it is inappropriate to promote political views in class. The upper administration is concerned that during this election year, with the increase in political activity, some faculty might be tempted to cross the line.

• The University Board of Trustees is seeking nominations for recipients of the institution’s highest honor, the Honorary Doctorate Degree, which will be presented at the Commencement Exercises in 2008. Information on this degree is found on the University Board of Trustees website.

**Discussion Items:**

**Department Advising**
At the April Executive Committee Meeting, advising in departments was discussed. It was decided to invite Dianne Leonard, College Academic Coordinator, to attend this meeting to give us details and status of academic advising in the College.

Diane commented that the College advisors are hard working, dedicated people. The majority of first semester classes that our students are enrolled in are auditorium size. As a result, the students do not feel connected to the College, which makes it critical that they connect with an advisor early in their academic career. Advising becomes an important component of retention. A tutoring center, to be organized under the direction of College staff, will be opening next fall.

The University is going to a mandatory advising model. When presented to our advisors, they were excited about the opportunity to meet with the students. Beginning this fall all new freshman at the University will be required to have an advising appointment before they can register for spring semester.

A PeopleSoft tracking system is being implemented, which will track students’ meetings with faculty and staff advisors. It will also track advice they receive. Many of the advisors are not prepared to talk about career options; they are not engineers and are not familiar with that process. They are experts in helping students navigate all of the opportunities at the University. So it is important that faculty advisors be available to fill this need. CLTE is creating a program to train faculty advisors.
Because engineering students don’t generally finish general education courses until near the end of their degree, departments need to set up advising to ensure students receive general education advising. Milind Deo commented that two or three departments require E-LEAP for all of their students. This is an excellent common first year course.

Dean Brown commented that advising is very important. Advisors must be positive in their comments about faculty and classes and should try to support the students’ educational and career goals.

Milind Deo commented that an ABET requirement is that our students be advised, monitored and evaluated.

As head of the College Math Committee, Milind Deo will have a serious discussion with the math department representatives regarding the less than satisfactory instruction of our students. Members of the Executive Committee volunteered to be involved in these discussions.

**Safety issues**
In light of the tragic events at Virginia Tech, Dean Brown sent an e-mail to faculty and staff regarding security in the College. He invited them to communicate any specific concerns or suggestions they had relating to security in the College. He received helpful suggestions mostly detailing building security issues. Some of the concerns expressed were: emergency phone is out of order on the 3rd floor of CME, doors in CME are being propped open late at night. Paul Tikalsky stated that he has asked that the doors be left open until 10:00 pm but security has refused to do that. Michael Kay will have a card reader installed on the south door of CME.

**Auxiliary Faculty Promotion Policy**
Dean Brown reported that he received a letter requesting that the College create a policy on auxiliary faculty promotions. He suggested that a committee be organized to work on a policy that would be compatible with the new College RPT policy. Dean Brown will contact the Chairs for suggestions of faculty to serve on the committee. People on the research faculty track should be reviewed, and should have real expectations for promotion.

**Recap/Discussion of ENAC**
The ENAC met on May 11 and challenged the College to have high aspirations. They want us to be interdisciplinary but were clear that they don’t want us to proliferate degrees and department names.

Dean Brown e-mailed to the chairs the most recent statistics on faculty teaching loads. Patrick Tresco, Milind Deo and Dean Brown will meet next week to consider the chairs’ requests for Engineering Initiative faculty positions. The Engineering Initiative is to be used to support engineering education, but we also need to consider the requests in light of the departments’ strategic plans, and how new positions will affect other aspects of the
department’s advancement. Dean Brown invited the chairs to send him an updated request, outlining their need for new positions and a description of how this would support the department’s strategic plan.

**BEEF**
Patrick Tresco reported that BEEF is available this year. Proposals are due June 15. Announcement of those awarded funding will be made July 1.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15.