COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
November 21, 2008

Minutes

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Patrick Tresco, Marilyn Davies, Michael Kay, JoAnn Lighty, Chris Pantelides (CVEE), Marc Bodson, Anil Virkar, Tim Ameel (ME), Martin Berzins, Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen

Excused: Paul Tikalsky, Kent Udell

Dean Brown expressed his appreciation for everyone coming to the meeting at the earlier hour. The meeting time was changed to 11:00 to accommodate those still needing to attend the Mandatory Training: Effort Reporting Meeting at 1:00.

Paul Tikalsky (CVEE) and Kent Udell (ME) were excused. Dean Brown welcomed Chris Pantelides and Tim Ameel representing CVEE and ME, respectively.

Announcements/Updates

Mandatory Training: Effort Reporting
To satisfy the NSF Effort Reporting Audit, the University agreed to several corrective action plans regarding the U’s Effort Reporting System, one of which was to develop and implement mandatory training for all individuals that receive or review PARs. One option for training was offered through the Research Administration Training Series and was held on November 6. Training could also be done through an online course. The College of Engineering set up two training sessions for faculty and staff held on November 12 and November 21. Dean Brown asked, what has been the reaction to the training on effort reporting so far? JoAnn Lighty aid she completed the online course which took her about an hour to complete.

College Council
Dean Brown welcomed Ajay Nahata, associate professor of ECE, as the new chair of the College Council. The Council did not function last year because of the chair vacancy, but is up and running again and will be very helpful to the College. The College Council is another connection for faculty views to be heard by College and University administration. Dean Brown thanked the chairs/director for the people from their department who serve on the College Council.

EMRL Expansion
Dean Brown was delighted to report that permission has been received to move forward on the design for expanding EMRL into the Floyd and Jeri Meldrum CVEE Engineering Building. Mr. Meldrum was concerned about the delay in beginning the project. Dave Pershing was able to spend some political capitol and make things happen. This is great news for the entire college.
MS/MBA Program Input
Dean Brown sent a note to the IAB, ENAC and EAA members, including a draft description of a dual MS/MBA program being considered by the College of Engineering and Business School, asking for their input. The draft was a version of the program for an MS in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA. Included with the agenda was the input received so far, which was mixed, but mostly positive. This is a degree aimed at people who have been working for a few years and now want to get an MBA. From engineering’s stand point, it would be for terminal MS students.

Department faculty need to decide if this dual degree would be useful to their students. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to discuss the degree with their faculty. If it makes sense, then the department should create a modification of the mechanical engineering version. Martin Berzins commented that some of his faculty were positive and others did not think the substance was there. They didn’t see how the two degrees are integrated. Marc Bodson commented that his faculty had concern about who would teach the design course. They also didn’t feel the course was substantial enough. Dean Brown suggested that some departments may want to let Business know that they already have major design courses, and see if these could be used to satisfy the requirement. The group agreed that it is important for the design course to relate to the department of study. The MS/MBA Program is still in draft form and Dean Brown encouraged the chairs/director to send their feedback to Gordon Smith and Taylor Randall.

Business will be giving 20 fellowships this fall to encourage students to enroll in the dual degree program. Engineering will not give fellowships to encourage enrollment; we do not have fellowships for MS students. Tim Ameel commented that there has been interest by mechanical engineering students for this type of program; however, he is unaware of the current program being discussed. It may have gone to the mechanical engineering curriculum committee for approval but the mechanical engineering graduate committee has not seen it yet. Dean Brown asked Tim to be in charge of organizing a meeting of the mechanical engineering graduate committee to see if they could come to agreement on a version of this dual degree.

Graduate Student Recruiting
Dean Brown sent a note to all faculty, including a flyer about the College graduate programs and the research accomplishments in the College. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to encourage their faculty to send the flyer to their faculty friends around the country and ask them to help us get the word out that the U is looking for top graduate students. This should help us get more applicants and, therefore, create a larger applicant pool with more really outstanding students. The best students from this pool will be invited to the Graduate Student Recruiting Day in March. This will also be good PR for the departments as we broadcast the announcement to our colleagues.

Patrick Tresco said that he has met with a representative or chair from each department and all have agreed to participate. Patrick will put together a straw agenda for the event and send it out early next week. JoAnn Lighty suggested that it is not too early to start thinking about housing for the students.
CAD Meeting – November 20

- It was announced that Tom Parks, VP of Research, will provide funds to support the writing of multi-investor proposals. Colleges and department will be expected to put in matching money. There will not be support for big projects out of institutes or places where infrastructure support is already in place. This is a huge step forward. The College will figure out some way to do a match for groups who are willing to put forth the effort.

- Dave Pershing reported that President Young thinks scholarship money is not being used as effectively as it could be used. Scholarships should be used to attract the best students to the U with hopes that they will complete their education here. The University will offer more freshman scholarships and expand the scholars program (Honors at Entrance and Presidential Scholars). All colleges and department will help offset costs by paying for these students during their senior year. The University will give us tuition waiver money that may be used to cover senior tuition instead of how it is currently being used. What they want us to do is commit to supporting students who came in as Honors of Entrance. President Young thinks it is wasteful for us to give scholarships to students who are receiving a full ride already. We need to become better coordinated so we aren’t focusing money on one student.

- Susan Olson rolled out a proposal regarding the requirement to do criminal background checks on new employees—both faculty and staff. The cost of each background check would be $28, which each college/department is responsible to pay. Because the requirement is a mandate from the legislature and Regents, we must do the checks, but there is still discussion about how the University will implement the details. It would be a burden in engineering to have to do background checks on every part time student. At the end of the CAD discussion it was voted almost unanimously that we shouldn’t do background checks on part time student employees. The law is especially focused on people who have interaction with minor students (minor is less than 21). On Monday, November 24, an important chairs’ meeting will be held to discuss this new requirement. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to express their views and the concerns of the College Executive Committee. The medical campus has done background checks for years. At some point in our hiring process, we need to let the person know we will be doing a background check. The medical campus does this in a way that the person self-discloses. Colorado, North Carolina, and Texas A&M are among schools that already do background checks.

- The Registrar and people in Admissions are implementing prerequisite checking now. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to have their curriculum committee go through their prerequisites and make sure they are accurate. Even though they are listed in the General Catalog, they still need to be checked for accuracy. The sooner the approved list of our courses is received the sooner it will happen. The lists should be sent to Sandy Bruhn. Faculty members and the department advisor will have the authority to over-ride a student into a class.
Budget
Dean Brown told the Committee that a plan has been created to handle the 4% budget cut this year and ongoing. The rumor is that our budgets may be cut another 5% this year; however, that 5% would be a soft cut, meaning it could come from any sources. The expectation is that starting July 1, 2009 we would have another 10% + the existing 4% budget cut. This is rumor but it behooves us to start thinking about future cuts.

As the State’s flagship college of engineering we cannot give up faculty quality or quality of education. The U claims to be the best place to get an education and we must maintain that position. It would be hard to justify a tuition increase if things are cut that would adversely affect the students. We would lose productivity money if we capped enrollment. Our College budget benefits from the research we do; 50% of returned overhead comes back to the College/Departments/PIs. An increase in funded research will increase our budget. There will be things done at the top level to help deal with the budget situation. Dave Pershing said reorganization is definitely on the table.

Martin Berzins commented that the budget cut presents the opportunity of reviewing faculty and programs. He suggested that there should be a retirement incentive program. Dean Brown said that retirement incentive programs are being discussed. Dean Brown asked whether the group thought it would be reasonable to take a faculty and staff salary reduction to help meet this budget cut, as opposed to reducing the size of the faculty and staff? Dean Brown stated that he will do everything he can to look out for the interests of the College of Engineering during these difficult budget times. Compared to almost every group on campus we are in an enviable position because of the support we have had over the past years, which have allowed us to meet much of the first budget cut by giving up open positions, rather than by cutting people and programs.

Discussion Items:

Department and Faculty Statistics
Dean Brown will send statistics to the chairs/director on teaching and research productivity by department. Some of the slides need an explanation: research data are done by head count; teaching data are done by FTE. Please use these data in faculty meeting discussions to help your faculty strategize about strengthening their department.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.