COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

February 27, 2009

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Patrick Tresco, Michael Kay, Rick Rabbitt, JoAnn Lighty, Paul Tikalsky, Dinesh Shetty (MSE), Kent Udell, Martin Berzins, Ajay Nahata, Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen, Ray Levey (ex-officio)

Excused: Marilyn Davies, Marc Bodson, Anil Virkar

Guest: Dinesh Shetty, Professor MSE and Dianne Leonard, College Academic Coordinator

Dean Brown welcomed Dinesh Shetty, representing Anil Virkar, and Dianne Leonard, College Academic Advisor, to the meeting.

Announcements/Updates

Graduate Certificate in Systems Engineering
Dean Brown reported that the Graduate Certificate in Systems Engineering received final approval by the Board of Trustees on February 10. This Certificate will help our students get jobs in what is certain to be a little softer market than they have recently experienced. It is now time to start advertising the Certificate.

MS/MBA
Dean Brown reported that MS/MBA proposals from five departments (BIO, ChE, ECE, ME, and SofC) were presented to the Graduate School on February 23 and have received approval from the University Graduate Committee. It is very important as we implement these joint degrees with business, that we be certain that the MS degree remains legitimate. We were willing to take a broad view by accepted some business classes as applying to the engineering degree, but it is important that we validate these students as worthy of an MS degree equal to that received by regular MS degree students. It was recommended that even though the proposals have received approval from the Graduate School, the chairs/director should review their department’s proposal again to make sure it meets the requirements for a quality MS degree.

Graduate Student Recruiting Event
The graduate student recruiting event will be held March 6 and 7. Breakfast and lunch will be held on Friday, March 6, in the Catmull Gallery. All departments are participating in the breakfast. ME and BIO will not participate in the lunch -- they preferred to continue the tradition of events held in their departments in years past. The breakfast will begin at 8:00 am with Dean Brown giving a brief welcome at 8:30. Faculty and graduate students are invited to join the visiting students for lunch. A poster session sponsored by SoC will be held in the afternoon. ChE will have a display during breakfast. Other departments and institutes are invited to have displays or posters at breakfast or lunch, too. At the October 2008
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the amount of support the College would provide to each
department for the event was included on the agenda. Sandy Bruhn will give the information to
the department administrators at her meeting with them on March 3. Saturday activities will
include skiing at Snowbird (Snowbird offers a 15% discounted group rate to those who identify
themselves as part of the U of U College of Engineering graduate recruiting event) or other
resorts. All of the graduate student candidates will receive a red ski hat embossed with the U
logo. The students will also receive a public relations DVD on the College of Engineering and
Utah. Dean Brown thanked Patrick and all others who have worked so hard to make this event
happen. It will be a good event and will get better year to year.

Prerequisite Checking
Chairs were reminded to get updated prerequisite lists turned in. The sooner our data is
received, the sooner prerequisite checking will be implemented. Prerequisite checking will
probably not be in place for Fall 2009. At this point, only the Colleges of Engineering and
Science are participating.

Freshman Direct Admission
The objective of direct admission is to recruit more top students to the U. Direct Admission has
come up as a discussion point this year because many of the students are not sure which area of
engineering they are interested in. The BIO undergrad advisors suggested that the College send
out the direct admission letters, and that undecided students be admitted to the College. Students
who know which department they want to major in would still be admitted directly to that
department; departments will always establish their own admission criteria. The undecided
direct-admit students would come to the College of Engineering where we can advise and look
out for them, instead of being in University College. This modification to the direct admission
process will allow undecided students time to learn about the various disciplines before
committing to one. When they are ready to commit, they will be directly admitted to major
status in the department of their choice if they meet the admission criteria set by the department.

After discussion, it was decided that letters would be sent from the College of Engineering
telling the students that they have been directly admitted, and that they can major in any
department. If students indicate a specific departmental preference, their information will be
sent directly to that department.

Dianne reviewed the University advising schedule for freshman, new transfer students, students
at their 2nd year of enrollment, undeclared students, and students applying for graduation. There
is not a University-wide plan for advising students every semester unless the student signs up for
graduation guarantee. Even in the current budget climate, one of our highest priorities will be to
offer courses as scheduled to support regular progress by our students. Diane said that to help
with retention of students in the College, she will request a list that gives the students’ previous
semester GPA, current semester GPA, and cumulative GPA. Currently, departments are pulling
this information student by student. Access to this data will give us the ability to do more
proactive advising. Dianne asked whether there was any other information that the
chairs/director would like her to request. It would be beneficial to list any grade below a C.
JoAnn Lighty complimented Dianne for the excellent job she does in advising students.
USTAR Building Construction Update
Tom Christensen, Manager of University Design & Construction Services, has let us know that Federal Way through the golf course will close on March 16. This will be a permanent closure. In the summer when traffic is lighter, major utility installation on Central Campus Drive will take place. A website will be set up to keep the Campus community informed.

There will also be a planned electrical shutdown that will affect the following buildings: March 14, KENNB; March 16, CME, Hedco, and EMRL; March 18, lower WEB. Michael is working on bringing in temporary power systems to help eliminate disruption to research. Staff and faculty in the affected buildings will take a paid leave.

Reminders
Sophomore/Junior Courses for Possible Remote Teaching
Dean Brown reported that he has only heard from a couple of departments regarding courses they feel could be taught remotely. He asked those who hadn’t replied to please send him the name of any course they feel could be taught to the feeder schools as they are anxious to know the possibilities. This is an opportunity for us to reinforce the leadership role the U plays in engineering. Weber will not be starting an engineering program this year.

Discussion Items:
College Council Role
The role of the College Council according to the College of Engineering College Council Charter is to “formulate policies and exercise primary authority to make decisions relating to College and department affairs to the extent authorized by Faculty Regulations”. The College Council did not really function last year. Ajay Nahata, Associate Professor of ECE, was appointed chair five months ago and the Council is meeting. Dean Brown stated that Ajay would like to make the Council an effective body that is recognized by the Executive Committee and one that actually helps the College move in the direction it should go. The Council is comprised of two elected faculty representatives from each department and two graduate students and two undergraduate students, each elected by their respective SACs. The students have not attended any meetings. Ajay said there are quite a few junior faculty on the Council and he is not entirely sure that is the best thing. The Council may be more effective to have one tenured and one untenured faculty member from each department. Ajay understands the role of the College Counsel to be an advising body to the dean and to give an effective voice to the faculty. As chair the past five months, it has been a bit of a struggle to figure out what the Council actually does. Council members seem a bit reluctant to speak up, but Ajay is trying to encourage Council members to go back to their departments and engage their fellow faculty in topics of discussion from Council meetings. Dean Brown commented that there are many things that the College Council can do to compliment the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee brought forth a number of topics on which the College Council could focus to improve things in the College: student recruiting, infrastructure, core facilities, or some specific area in the strategic plan. It was agreed that the members of the College Council be given an opportunity to participate in their department faculty meetings and to bring faculty input to the College Executive Committee through Prof. Nahata. Dean Brown commented that he did not want the College Council to become an adversarial body working against the Executive Committee; the two groups need to be coordinated.
Dean Brown commented that at the January Executive Committee Meeting he reported that University endowment managers decided that only 3% of an endowment could be spent. There was some discussion as to whether that was a wise move and so another meeting was held with some of the deans, the financial managers, and Dave Pershing. The conclusion was, for large endowments of $1 million or more, 4% rather than 3% could be spent this year if there was an important reason. This would have to be approved as an exception by VP Pershing.

There is still a lot of uncertainty as to what the actual budget cut will be for FY2010. The Higher Education Appropriations Committee has passed a recommendation of 19%. There may be some backfilling from the stimulus package, but that is one time money. The stimulus package makes the stipulation that the Governor distribute the money. Some legislators would prefer that the stimulus package follow the normal budget process where the Governor recommends and the Legislature allocates. The stimulus bill requires that the states fund higher education at the 2006 level in order to get federal money. That may amount to exactly 19% for Utah.

Dean Brown said that it is important that we focus on increasing revenues, rather than just cutting budgets. Several possibilities for increasing revenues are: increasing research, commercialization of research results, and distance education. Another possibility is differential tuition. Engineering has received approval from University administration to request differential tuition, and proposals (one for graduate and one for undergraduate) as recrafted by Paul Brinkman, have been generated. Dean Brown commented that there have been discussions about differential tuition for years because an engineering education is more expensive than others across campus. The current budget cuts are the catalyst for putting differential tuition into place now, to maintain the College’s momentum. For Utah, in the long term, differential tuition will go far in helping us develop higher quality programs. At a meeting held on Wednesday, February 25, to discuss differential tuition with department SAC membership, Dean Brown gave copies of the proposals to all in attendance. Included with the proposals was a draft letter similar to that used by other SACs across the university to support differential tuition. Dean Brown wanted to know whether the chairs/director have had a chance to meet with their own SACs and what their reaction was. Joann Lighty reported that she has met with her SAC who would support differential tuition. In a few cases, faculty have objected to differential tuition. Rick Rabbit said his UG and Grad SAC wonder what will happen to the money if the economy turns around. The UG want the money earmarked. The students have a long list of things they would like to see the differential tuition money used for to enhance their program – primarily student activities and labs. Kent Udell has met with his SACs and they seem in favor. Paul Tikalsky met with CVEE students; they drafted a letter and unanimously endorsed it because of the long-term effects to the department.

Dean Brown said he spent 30 minutes with a Chrony reporter who also wants to talk to some of our students. An ME student has organized a meeting for all engineering students for Monday, March 2, at noon in 104 LWEB. An associate dean of the School of
Business (which has had differential tuition for some time) will participate on the panel along with Dean Brown and some students. A follow-up meeting to the February 25 meeting with the SACs has been scheduled for Monday, March 2, at 3:00 in 3147 MEB. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to proactively visit with their students. He can’t tell the students how the budget cut and differential tuition would affect their program but the chairs/director can.

- Dean Brown talked to Scott Anderson and learned that there is a bill going through the Legislature to add money to USTAR this year and in future years. USTAR has been huge for the College of Engineering -- of the 13 USTAR faculty hired, 10 are in the College of Engineering. This is our ticket to greater prominence.

- After saying they objected strenuously to salary cuts, USU actually did a salary cut. Dean Brown senses quite a bit of resistance to this from University of Utah administration. As they started looking at how to implement a salary cut, it became clear it would be an extremely complicated process with multiple situations that would require specific rules. If our budget cut is more than 15%, Dean Brown said there will be a furlough and a reduction of FTE. Martin Berzins commented that he has talked to his faculty about a salary cut and they unanimously felt that if it meant the difference between some of their colleagues losing their jobs or everyone staying employed, they will take a salary cut. Dean Brown has been given to understand that a reduction in FTE would have to be campus wide; a single college or department is not allowed reduce its faculty members’ FTE. But he suggested that chairs should remind faculty members that they could support their department’s budget by offsetting some of their academic year salary with research funds if they are in a position to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.