COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 
MINUTES  

April 24, 2009

Present: Richard Brown, Milind Deo, Patrick Tresco, Rick Rabbitt, JoAnn Lighty, Paul Tikalsky, Marc Bodson, Anil Virkar, Kent Udell, Chuck Hansen (SofC) Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen, Ray Levey (ex-officio), Phil Smith (ex-officio)

Excused: Marilyn Davies, Michael Kay, Martin Berzins, Ajay Nahata

Dean Brown welcomed Chuck Hansen from the School of Computing, to the meeting, representing Martin Berzins.

Announcements/Updates

USTAR Building Groundbreaking
The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the USTAR Building was held on April 22. Dean Brown said that probably the nicest thing about the event, in his opinion, was Governor Huntsman’s remark on how central USTAR is to the future of the state.

Summer Construction Disruptions
Dean Brown reported that there will be a lot of utility work done before foundations for the USTAR Building are laid. A chiller will be built across the street east of WEB and will be used by buildings on the northern part of campus. This will eliminate the need of the chiller built for WEB and also eliminate the construction of a chiller for the new Meldrum. Around the first of June, a 20 ft deep trench will be dug down the middle of Central Campus Drive. The driveway in front of WEB will be used as a road while this construction is underway.

Construction is currently underway to bring a hot water line between CME and EMRL. Connection to hot water will be lost to those two buildings and MEB when CME and EMRL are connected to the hot water feed.

Budget Meetings and Summary
Dean Brown said that he and Michael Kay have had budget meetings with all but one department and all have gone well. We are very fortunate to have as good a budget as we have compared to schools around the country. Dean Brown thanked the chairs for the opportunity he has had to meet with faculty during their department faculty meetings. It has been a healthy thing to keep faculty informed about what is going on with the budget and to try to keep the level of anxiety down.

As everyone probably knows, our FY2009 budget had two mid-year cuts, amounting to about a 7% cut overall. Fortunately, most departments in Engineering had open positions that could be used to cover most of this cut (not true elsewhere in the University).
One question that seemed to be on everyone’s mind was, how did our budget go from the 17% that we heard announced as the cut to higher education, to the 19% reported by the U? It was unfortunate that the state originally announced the budget cut would be 19%, as this is not the 19% that we eventually saw cut. The University’s state budget cut for FY2010 was $45 million. There were no new monies for operation and maintenance, fuel and power, or benefits. While the cost of these things was going up, the budget was going down. The University looked at what could and could not be cut. It was decided not to cut benefits (i.e., raise the cost of benefits to the faculty/staff). One-third of the cost of people (faculty and staff) is in benefits, so when the cost of benefits increases it has a big effect on the budget. Productivity money to the departments was kept at the same rate. The campus maintenance budget was cut in half. (Approximately $100M per year is needed to upgrade infrastructure on campus that is in a state of decay, so the only major infrastructure maintenance being done now is emergency maintenance. The maintenance people are not able to be proactive.) The O&M rate for buildings that have been on campus for a long time was set when they were built. CME, for example, does not receive much O&M money. The State pulled back O&M money that had been in the budget for the recently dedicated Sutton Building (because it was not quite completed yet) and the new Business building (construction has not been started yet). With benefits and productivity money protected, and the cost of benefits, O&M and fuel & power increasing, we have to reduce academic budgets by 19% to balance the budget.

For the FY2010 budget, the University received $22M of stimulus money, reducing the University’s actual budget cut for next year to about $23M, which results in a reduction to the academic budget (compared to the original FY2009 budget) of about 9 ½%. For Engineering, much of this is made up by our new differential tuition, so our departments will have budgets for FY2010 that are within a couple of percent of the original FY2009 budget. We do not expect to have stimulus money for the FY2011 budget. However, one could expect that if state funds stay low, there will be another tuition hike to help offset the shortfall. It is doubtful that the University will face a 19% cut next year; however, it would be wise to plan for a 15% cut. Again, in Engineering, differential tuition amounts to about 6 to 9% of departments’ budgets. Dean Brown said if we budget for a 15% cut, we are taking a reasonable approach. We don’t want to be so conservative that we miss out on opportunities and we don’t want to be overly confident either.

What we can do as faculty and in our administrative roles is continue to improve fiscal efficiency in all that we do. The University National Advisory Council met a month ago and members of that Council were asking why they were receiving so much printed material during this budget crisis. Dean Brown said we need to be sensitive about this in our own PR efforts.

Dean Brown commented that he is really pleased to see the way some of the chairs have been figuring out ways to save money. One example is working together across departments. There are opportunities for all of us to do things more efficiently by working together.

Applications for freshmen and transfer students are up University wide. This is an indication that when the economy is down enrollment is up. With differential tuition and productivity money, that could help our budgets.
The State’s revenue from income taxes is higher than what was expected. Because of this, the legislators didn’t feel a special session was needed. The Governor wants a special session to address some other issues, anyway.

**Distinguished Teacher Nominations**
Dean Brown reported that there were no new nominations for distinguished professor submitted this year, University wide. Nominations not selected when originally submitted are included with the current year’s pool of applications for 3 years. Dean Brown suggested to the chairs that if there is someone in their department who is deserving of this recognition and isn’t already nominated, that a nomination packet be prepared and submitted next fall.

**Capital Equipment**
The federal government considers anything costing more than $5,000 to be capital equipment. The state looks at capital equipment as anything costing $1,000 or more, and, therefore, we need to track all equipment costing $1,000 or more. Right now the annual inventory requested by the University includes items that are $5,000 and above. The chairs commented that they do not receive tags for items under $5,000.

**Outreach Activities – Freshman Recruiting**
Dianne Leonard, College Academic Coordinator, attended the March Executive Committee Meeting to discuss Freshman Direct Admission. The goal of direct admittance is to recruit the best students. A letter had been prepared to send to all direct admit freshmen either by the dean or department chair/director. After the March meeting, Dianne talked to several departments that indicated they were sending the letters out on their own. Milind Deo commented that it was difficult for Dianne to reconcile the differences in the College letter and the departments’ letters.

Dean Brown said that the chairs/director probably had received a memo from central development regarding coordinated recruitment efforts. He commented that USU recruits very vigorously. His daughter, a senior in high school this year, receives mailings almost every week from USU. Recruiting efforts do have an effect on potential students. We need to do more than we are currently doing to recruit the best undergraduate students. The University does buy the undergraduate ACT list for Utah; it is expensive to buy lists from other states.

Milind Deo reported that displays, “Discover Engineering” have been created which will be taken to the schools to assist in recruiting efforts. There are nine displays, one for the College and one for each department. The departments are welcome to use the displays and will be responsible for staffing. The College outreach group has seen about 30,000 students this academic year. Elementary Education week, April 13-17, went very well. Two thousand elementary students from 17 schools participated. Saturday, April 25, there will be a science and arts show at the Salt Lake Library. The theme is renewable energy. Our outreach group will be participating and teaming up with the NSF outreach group and students from ME.
Reminders

Convocation
Sandy Bruhn reminded everyone that Engineering’s convocation will be held on May 8 at 4:15 pm. She asked the chairs to please ask their faculty to line up at 3:45pm in the west tunnel of the Huntsman Center. The procession will start at 4:00pm.

ENAC
Dean Brown reminded the chairs to RSVP their attendance at ENAC to Sarah Bagdoian. She needs a final count to finalize plans for the event.

Discussion Items:

Math
The Utah State Office of Education has organized a Mathematics Steering Committee to help meet their goal for every high school graduate to have the mathematical knowledge, understanding, and skills necessary for employment, for the pursuit of higher educational opportunities, and to function mathematically in everyday life. The committee is composed of Utah educators, state and district leaders, higher education and elementary leaders, and legislative and business leaders. Milind Deo commented that the committee is looking at restructuring K-12 math curriculum to better align with university goals. The Committee has developed some recommendations that Dean Brown has sent to all of the chairs/director. One concern of this Committee is that different groups have different interests in figuring out what they need for their math constituents. We should target students who have a higher ability in math and we should create a curriculum that is in line with what we would like covered.

There is also a math committee at the University. This last year credit for math 2250 was increased from 3 to 4. Milind has been encouraging the committee to create a curriculum where all Engineering students would go through the same math program (4 semesters of 4 credits = 16 credit hours), but it has been difficult to get everyone on board. This engineering math curriculum would enable us to define what we want in math. It was suggested that people with joint appointments in math and engineering be hired as possible teachers. The logistics need to be figured out—how to organize the course and who would be best to teach the courses. Phil Smith commented that math receives a lot of money from engineering because our students are required to take math classes. It would be reasonable for Math to pay our students to TA. Dean Brown suggested that the chairs/director make sure that either they or their faculty who are involved in these math issues actively participate on Milind’s math committee. We also need to let our students know about the free tutoring offered by the College, which is aimed at the freshmen students.

Overhead
Dean Brown said that overhead (F&A) is recalculated from time to time. As PIs, we would like to have a lower overhead rate. From the University’s and our budget point of view, a higher overhead rate is preferred. According to Barbara Nielsen, Director of Governmental Accounting and Support Services, it looks like our overhead rate will go down to maybe 48.5.
ABET
Milind Deo reported that the ABET department teams are now preparing their self-studies. He reviewed with the chairs what information they will need to provide for the Faculty and Facilities criterion. He will send an electronic copy of the criterion to the chairs indicating what information the College will provide and what the departments will need to provide.

Technical Electives – Law and Business
The Business School is organizing a course for engineering students to give them a background in business issues aimed specifically at engineering. This will be taught by an instructor from Business. We need to determine what kind of credit our students will receive for this course. If it can’t be used as credit towards their course of study no one will want to take it. Dean Brown requested that the chairs talk to their faculty to see if this could be a technical elective. When our engineering course was taught for business students there was only one business student enrolled, the rest were engineering students. The reason for such low enrollment by business students was because Business hadn’t set it up as course credit towards an MBA. This will be changed for next year.

Dean Brown said we have also been trying to set up a law course designed for engineering students. The law school hasn’t hired anyone but Lee Hollaar stepped forward and suggested that his proposal for an engineering law course be used. Would we make this course available to students as a technical elective or would this course qualify as a gen ed course? Milind Deo commented that it is difficult to have any course qualify as a gen ed course. Dean Brown asked the chairs to talk to their faculty about this course and how it can be incorporated into the students’ curriculum.

Students need to understand ethics. There is an existing ethics class which has low enrollment because it can’t be counted as an elective. Milind commented that the only way to keep this course is it to make it required.

We are working to make sure our Emerging Technology course will satisfy the University’s new international requirement.

USTAR Proposals.
Dean Brown reminded the chairs that USTAR proposals are due next Thursday, April 30. There is no better way to help your department than to have a USTAR team. Dean Brown asked the chairs to do everything they can to help support people who are writing proposals. Proposals will need to be strong. The research focus must be in renewable energy. It will be important to show upper administration in a convincing manner that you have a faculty search committee that will hire truly world class people as part of your team.

US News Graduate Ranking
Dean Brown showed a power point of engineering department rankings for the periods 2004-2009 according to US News & World Report (see below). He told the chairs that they are all doing a lot of the right things to improve our rankings. We just have to keep working on it. The NRC report is still not out. There are several other rankings that are interesting but US News &
World Report is the one that is seen most by students. Dean Brown received the U.S. News & World Report survey of Americas Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Engineering Programs, which is due Monday, April 27. He will send a copy of the survey to the chairs so they can include their input, if desired, before he submits it.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

US News Raw Rankings
US News Percentile Rankings
US News Percentile Changes over Time