COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

September 25, 2009

Present: Richard Brown, Patrick Tresco, Milind Deo, Michael Kay, Rick Rabbitt, JoAnn Lighty, Steve Burian (CVEE), Marc Bodson, Dinesh Shetty (MSE), Don Bloswick, (ME), Chuck Hansen (SoC), Sandy Bruhn, Vicki Jensen

Excused: Marilyn Davies, Anil Virkar, Tim Ameel, Paul Tikalsky, Martin Berzins, Ajay Nahata

Guests: Cynthia Furse, Assoc. VP for Research; Tatjana Jevremovic, Professor, Presidential Endowed Chair in Nuclear Engineering, Director of the Nuclear Engineering Program; Steve Burian, CVEE; Dinesh Shetty, MSE; Don Bloswick, ME; Chuck Hansen, SoC.

Dean Brown welcomed Steve Burian (CVEE), Don Bloswick (ME), Dinesh Shetty (MSE) and Chuck Hansen (SoC) to the meeting representing their departments. He also welcomed Cynthia Furse and Tatjana Jevremovic.

Announcements/Updates

New Research Program Support
Cynthia Furse reported on two goals of the Office of VP for Research: 1) enhance collaborative research at the U and 2) improve research communication to faculty. Two grant writers have been hired to support large collaborative proposal development. The grant writers will be housed in OSP. Also, there will be up to $50K per project for additional support that may be needed, such as travel. For regular grants there will be a staff person from the University Writing Center available to help faculty in the preparation of their proposals. This help will mainly focus on basic language and writing editing and will be a free service. Cynthia asked the chairs/director to send her names of faculty who may need support in preparing their proposals and she will contact them. Rick Rabbitt suggested Hamid Ghandehari. There is no deadline to apply for the funds; they will be given on a first-come first-served basis. In the next few weeks there may be another student available to help edit proposals, for a small fee. A University account will support the cost of editing proposals and the VP for Research Office will provide support for the large collaborative grants. To enhance success of proposals awarded, faculty will be encouraged to ask their colleagues to review their proposals before submission. Cynthia asked the chairs/director to please communicate this information to their faculty.

Communications from the VP Research Office will now come through the FYI online newsletter; e-mails not considered “critical” will no longer be sent. The communication strategy with the outside world from the VP Research Office is also being revamped. The annual research report will be replaced with more frequent, more focused communication based on
specific messages to specific audiences. Videos on University faculty research will be prepared and distributed via YouTube, etc., initially as an experiment.

Work is in progress to enable electronic signatures on Document Summary Sheets. This should be automated within six months. Dean Brown thanked Cynthia for coming to the meeting and giving us a heads up on all the new developments, and especially for all the good work she is doing in her new position. Patrick and Dean Brown recently met with Tom Parks, VP for Research--Dean Brown said that the new initiatives coming from the VP for Research Office are a breath of fresh air.

**Utah Engineering Program Meeting**
Dean Brown reported that next Friday, October 2, he is hosting a meeting for the Engineering deans/chairs around the state. Every school will be represented except USU. Dean Brown thought it would be good if the chairs or a representative attended the meeting to interact with this group for a while beginning with lunch. We want to support and encourage schools that have pre-engineering programs, and let them know that the U is a good place for their students to transfer to. A tour of our facilities at the end of the meeting should help people from schools that would like to start four-year engineering programs see how much investment is necessary to build a quality program.

**Leadership Seminars**
CVEE is hosting a seminar series focused on the Management of Engineering. Everyone is invited. Details will be posted on CVEE’s website.

**Academic Calendar**
Milind Deo announced that the first Engineering Iditarod is being held today from 3:00 to 5:30. Engineering Day will be held on October 31. Dean Brown thanked the chairs/director and their faculty for their involvement in the various outreach events.

**Discussion Items**

**Sederburg Visit Postmortem**
Dean Brown thanked the members of the Committee for the work that they and many faculty did during Commissioner Sederburg’s visit to the College in August. It was a really important interaction that we had with him. We explained to him our position that the state would be much better off to invest in the two research universities, UofU and USU, and continue with pre-engineering programs at the other schools. He has a different view. The Commissioner’s visit concluded with a tour of some of our labs, which was very effective in giving him insight into what it takes to make a quality engineering program. A visit to the U by Governor Herbert is in the works. Dean Brown will let those planning the visit know that the College of Engineering would like a slice of his time if possible.

**ABET Postmortem**
Dean Brown thanked Milind Deo for coordinating the ABET team visit to the College and the College of Mines. The outcome of the visit was very good. There were 0 deficiencies and a few weaknesses and concerns. The College received several commendations. The ABET team chair
said he had never been on a review that was as smooth and clean as ours was. In January a written report of the evaluation will be received from the ABET team, which gives us the opportunity to take care of any issues that were reported. Milind recommended that we start preparing our responses to address the weaknesses and concerns, as those will be due 30 days after we receive the report. The final report of evaluation will be sent in June after the Summer Commission meeting.

Differential Tuition
The initial roll-out of differential tuition this fall semester was a little rough. Dean Brown said most of the student resistance came from ME and BIO students. Prior to presenting the proposal for differential tuition to the Board of Trustees, Dean Brown invited the department SACs to a meeting. He then had an open meeting for all students. Letters of support were received from each department SAC committee, which went forward with the proposal presented to the Board of Trustees. After the Trustees approved differential tuition, Dean Brown wrote a letter about the implementation of differential tuition which was posted on the College website and emailed to all engineering students. At the beginning of this semester, students reported that they had not received the email. After investigation by the UMail people, it was discovered that there was a glitch in the UMail delivery system and the students did not receive the message. The second problem arose when Income Accounting started identifying the courses to which differential tuition would be assessed; research hours in some departments were not included. So some students received a tuition bill which did not include the differential tuition fee, and then received another bill saying they owed more money for differential tuition. That contributed to the confusion. Dean Brown wrote a letter to the students who had sent him a letter in protest of differential tuition. Once the students received Dean Brown’s response and explanation they understood the situation and that the rules had not been changed at the last minute. The Executive Committee wondered why differential tuition could not be charged directly to research projects. According to Barbara Nielsen of Governmental Accounting, this cannot be done because it is part of the University’s overhead agreement with the federal government. Dean Brown will explore options with her. Michael Kay said that differential tuition is collected, goes to Dave Pershing’s office, and is then transferred to each department account.

Scholarships
We are trying to do more effective advertising of the many financial resources available to our students, especially in light of the tight financial situation some of them may be in because of the weak economy and differential tuition. There are need-based scholarships and low interest loan programs that can help students stay on track to graduate. Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to please make sure the word gets out to their students and if they know of students in trouble, please send them to Sandy Bruhn. Last year our scholarship applicant pool was small and we were able to give scholarships to essentially every student that applied that met the basic requirements. If we are giving everyone who applies a scholarship, we are not using our scholarship funds to the best advantage.

Included with the agenda is a Summary of Endowed Scholarships and Fellowships for FY09 (Appendix A attached). The endowments produce interest income which becomes expendable funds. Some departments have an excess of expendable funds which the U administration does
not like. We do want to make sure we are making these scholarships available to the students. The College has $500K available in expendable funds.

We are looking at ways that might increase the number of scholarship applications received. It was suggested to have one basic application. The College Scholarship Application could be a template modified to include department specific scholarship information. Students wouldn’t apply to the College, they would apply at the department and the department would pass the completed applications on to the College. The process would need to be worked out, but if we simplify and have one application this might increase the number of applications received and cut down on the confusion for the students of having multiple places to apply.

We’ve had a little feedback that indicates requiring letters of reference is keeping some students from applying. The Dean asked the chairs/director to please talk to their people who are involved with scholarships to see how helpful letters of reference are and what they think about having one basic application and send him their suggestions. JoAnn Lighty felt that the students should be included in this discussion. Dean Brown recommended that she talk to her students and send him their ideas. Another issue that needs better coordination is that a number of students receive multiple scholarships, some at the department level and some at the college level. It would be best to coordinate this so that the best students receive the biggest, most prestigious scholarships, and so that more students receive a scholarship.

**Budgets**

The budget picture does not look bright and right now the state is talking about a $700-800M deficit. State agencies have been asked to do scenarios using a 3-5% budget cut for next year. There will not be stimulus money. Tuition and differential tuition will increase. The College has more money this year than last year by 7%. Paul Brinkman, Associate VP for Budget and Planning, will not approve any new faculty positions unless we can show him we can fund those positions with a 7% budget cut. Dean Brown has received a couple of requests for new faculty. He said before he sends those forward he needs to see the department budget supporting those positions. There are some departments who are in a good position to hire despite the anticipated budget cut.

**Nuclear Minor**

Dean Brown introduced Tatjana Jevremovic, the new Director of the Utah Nuclear Engineering Program. The meeting was turned over to Tatjana to present a proposed Nuclear Engineering Minor.

In the next five years 48% of the current nuclear force will retire. NRC will hire 400 engineers yearly. For this reason, NRC is providing money to fund nuclear education. A lot of state universities that have never had nuclear engineering are now offering certificates, minors, courses, etc. The U of U has a history in Nuclear Engineering education, and we should compete well for these NRC education funds. Fields of study that will be targeted range from healthcare to radiochemistry. We have a TRIGA reactor, which is one of 13 left at universities in the country. It is a great resource to give students hands-on experience. Tatjana has met with Ed Barbanell, Associate Dean of Curriculum Administration, regarding the minor. It will be a standalone minor, administered at the College level, so that students from any department can get the
minor (if it resided in a department, students from that department would be ineligible). Minors must require between 15 and 21 credit hours. The NE minor will require 18 credit hours. The courses will start spring 2010 semester. Dean Brown invited the chairs/director to talk to people in their departments and send their input directly to Tatjana in the next week.

**High School Students in Research Lab**
Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to encourage their faculty to find places for the motivated high school students who have requested an opportunity to volunteer in their research.

**Graduate Recruiting**
Patrick Tresco reported that we will be focusing on graduate recruiting again this year. Flyers describing each department have been updated and electronic pdf’s will be sent to the departments, which may then send them to students and universities across the country. The College will contact our own students and invite them to provide contact and grade information if they would like us to help them find employment or graduate school opportunities. We will send our list of students to schools that may be interested in recruiting our students, letting them know that these are our high achieving students, and requesting a similar list in exchange. Departments will be responsible to follow through on the outside lists they receive. The College will also coordinate the graduate recruiting day which will be similar to last year’s event. Patrick asked the chairs/director to let him know who their department coordinator will be as soon as possible and to send him their input on how to improve the event. Dean Brown commented that in 2008 the top 13 students that applied had an average GPA of 3.8; only 3 students had an analytical GRE of 780 or higher. In 2009, the average GPA of the top 13 students was 3.96, and 12 students had an analytical GRE above 780. This is a huge improvement, and is due at least in part, to our more aggressive recruiting.

**Direct Admissions for Law, Medicine and Business**
Several schools (law, business, etc.) are about to start offering direct admission to high school students for their professional programs. The College of Engineering will also make such offers, so as to attract these top students. We also need to continue to grow direct admission to our B.S. programs.

**B.S. Degree in Operations Management**
The School of Business is requesting permission to start a B.S. Degree in Operations Management. The Executive Committee is supportive of their starting such a degree. It does not seem to overlap too much with what we offer in Engineering.

**Engineers Without Borders**
The College has an active Engineers Without Borders student organization. They are looking for good things to do and it would be wonderful for us to help support them. They underscore the fact that engineers and computer scientists make the world a better place. Dean Brown said he has met with Yeah Samake, Executive Director of Mali Rising Foundation, who is interested in a relationship with The University of Utah. There may be some opportunities for our students to do a humanitarian project in Mali. Mr. Smake would be delighted, for example, to see a CvEE senior project to design a sanitary sewer system for a village. Let’s look for opportunities for our students to participate in meaningful service projects.
Financial Management
The University is reminding us of the importance of safeguarding University Resources. They are concerned in particular because the U has had several cases of fraud in the past year or two. The word to the department chairs/director is to be involved and diligent in department financial matters and don’t assume everything is OK. The University auditors say that people involved in these cases are not who you would expect; they have typically been people who have worked at the U for a long time that have gotten into personal financial trouble. Dean Brown said he was pleased that a number of the chairs are going to take advantage of the opportunity to attend a budget and financial training meeting presented by people from the Controller’s Office.

Auxiliary Faculty Policies
Dean Brown sent an e-mail to the chairs/director earlier regarding the CoE Guidelines for Auxiliary Faculty, and appreciated the good feedback he received, which has been incorporated into the draft document. Feedback was also received from Susan Olson, and several things were added at her request. To strengthen the positions of research and lecturing faculty, we need to make the evaluation criteria (in the areas in which they are being evaluated) similar to the criteria used to evaluate tenure track faculty. Patrick Tresco commented that auxiliary faculty should have responsibility for professional service as do tenured track faculty. Lecturer faculty should be the very best lecturers and research faculty should be outstanding researchers. The clinical title should be dropped and either lecturer or researcher used, whichever reflects what the auxiliary faculty member actually does. (The clinical term goes back to a time before the U had a position called lecturing faculty.) Dean Brown asked the chairs/director to send him their specific suggestions in the next few days so he can send Susan Olson the next draft of the Auxiliary Guidelines. Once the document has been reviewed by Susan, it will be sent to the ad hoc committee that has worked on it before, and it will be sent to all regular faculty members for input, discussion, and finally a vote. It must also be approved by the University Auxiliary Faculty Policy Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.