

**Engineering College Advisory Council
Meeting Notes**

April 19-20, 1999

The Engineering College Advisory Council (ECAC) met in Ithaca on April 19-20, 1999. The following ECAC members were present.

John Anderson
Richard A. Aubrecht
J. P. Barger
Jay Carter
Dale Corson
Robert A. Cowie
Samuel C. Fleming
Peter Giles
Jerrier A. Haddad
James Hillier

John E. Hopcroft
William Hudson
Michael S. Isaacson
James McCormick
Mark Myers
John S. Rodewig
Neil A. Schilke (chair)
Sherri Stuewer
Richard F. Tucker

Challenges Facing the College of Engineering

The ECAC feels that its role is to provide the eyes and ears for the College, not only to the outside world, but also within the University. It wants to be able to provide the College with sound advice for the new millennium. It feels most comfortable commenting on a proposed "vision" rather than helping the College create one. The ECAC cannot take on the whole problem but can assist in helping to work on various subsets of that vision. Therefore it's important for the College to have documentation of the vision/strategy to which the ECAC can refer and for which the ECAC can offer advice in context.

In order to give the College appropriate advice on defining its role in the future, the ECAC feels that it needs to know the interrelationships between Colleges at Cornell and where the Engineering College fits into the larger role of the University. It would be beneficial to speak with the Provost at a future meeting in this regard and to get input from the University on its expectations of the College.

There was some concern that the departments still view themselves as the primary entity of the College and did not view College success (strategy) as a department success (strategy). The ECAC would like to meet with the department heads directly to discuss this issue.

The ECAC compliments the College on its efforts to increase the diversity profile of faculty and accepted students.

Role of the ECAC

There were questions concerning the composition of the ECAC. The consensus of the Council was that there should be a mix of Cornell alumni and non-Cornell people in order to get a more broader world view. But, the Council realizes that alumni tend to have better records at attending the meeting. It was suggested that there should be term limits on ECAC membership so that fresh views could be brought in on a regular basis.

In order to give the College advice on its “vision”, The ECAC would like to see specific “work blocks” to be accomplished over the next 3-4 Council meetings. The Council proposes to have teams from the College and Council work together and be accountable for specific “work blocks” and work between Council meetings. It was agreed that this takes a significant caloric expenditure, but Council agreed that it would be worthwhile.

ABET Review

The ECAC was concerned about the College’s somewhat negative response concerning the recent ABET review. The ECAC looks upon the ABET review as giving constructive criticism to the College and that the College ought to look at preparations for the next review in a more positive light to benefit from the ABET process. The Council would like to know what role ABET accreditation plays in the College’s vision for the future.

Regarding the apparent difficulty in interactions between the Engineering College and the Johnson School, the ECAC appointed Bob Cowie to head a subcommittee comprised of ECAC and JGSM Advisory Council members. This subcommittee will look at the apparent disconnect between the two Colleges and provide a preliminary recommendation back to the Council.

Duffield Hall

The ECAC expressed a strong desire for all the constituencies involved to work together on the process for design and construction of Duffield Hall, so that the many issues and concerns can be addressed as part of the main stream activities. The Council was pleased that there was agreement concerning the need for the CNF to remain open during the construction process. However, several members of Council were concerned that no one person was in charge of the entire program. There was also some concern that the Duffield process was moving too slow and that there was no university push for developing a political (i.e. New York State) infrastructure for supporting such efforts.

Future of Earth Science

The ECAC felt that this program is at a critical juncture and needs strong leadership. They felt that the presentation was good and would encourage the department to take an external view and benchmark itself against comparable departments.

It was felt that the thinking concerning this program needs a systems focus. The Council was concerned that there was no discussion of the various interdependencies of the programs (i.e., undergraduate, graduate and research), nor was there discussion concerning the research funding for this proposed composite program. The Council would like to see five year projections on items such as undergraduate, graduate enrollment, for example. Because this new initiative will cross College boundaries, the ECAC felt that it needed a permanent home. Again, the Council felt that to understand the relationship between the College and University would help in giving advice on this initiative. The connectivities and interdependencies need to be defined for Earth Science and Biological Sciences, Agriculture, Arts & Sciences and Engineering, etc., we need to look for synergy not separatism and elitism.

School of ORIE Review

The ECAC was encouraged by the strategic review within the School. There appears to be potential for collaborations with several other departments, particularly CEE and the Johnson Graduate School of Management and the recent College-wide System Engineering initiatives. The Council encourages the

School to continue looking at these collaborations in its long term planning. It was felt that the School should fare much better under the new ABET guidelines.

Professional Development Initiatives in the College

The ECAC thinks that the new Associate Dean for Professional Development, Mike Kelley, is off to a good start. It would like to see an update at future meetings. The Council suggests that the College should focus on building long term institutional change and developing management skills of chairs.

Diversity Initiatives

The ECAC felt that Deborah Cox gave an excellent presentation and applauds the willingness to make staff changes to get everything right. The Council feels that the College needs comparative data between Engineering and other units in the University and would like to see this at a future meeting. Again, the Council feels that in order to give the College good advice, it needs to know the relation between the Engineering College and the University. Goals need to be established for the initiatives.

Next Meeting

The ECAC agreed that the fall meeting would occur on October 22 and 23 (Friday and Saturday). There will be a poll for the Spring 2000 meeting shortly.