



College of Engineering Dean's Office

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Engineering College Advisory Council Meeting Notes

April 17-18, 2000

The Engineering College Advisory Council (ECAC) met in Ithaca on April 17-18, 2000. The following ECAC members were present.

John Anderson
J.P. Barger
Charles Brown
Jay Carter
Dale Corson
Samuel Fleming
Peter Giles
John Hopcroft
William Hudson
Michael Isaacson

W. Keith Kennedy
Gretchen Knoell
James McCormick
Neil Schilke (chair)
William Shreve
Roger Strauch
Sherri Stuewer
Jan Suwinski
Richard Tucker

Priority and Vision of the College

The ECAC compliments the College on moving forward in multiple areas concerning the diversity issue. It applauds the efforts that have gone in to increasing retention rates among women and underrepresented minorities and closing the gap between those groups and Caucasian males. Moreover, the recent diversity in the new hires is commendable.

The ECAC wishes to compliment Cathy Long for clarifying some of the financial issues the College faces. The future of the College could be in jeopardy unless the financial situation improves. The ECAC feels there are not sufficient resources for the College to remain a top rated institution and suggests that the concept of a separate endowment for Engineering be considered provided the budget is not reduced accordingly. A subset of the ECAC is willing to talk to the provost about this problem, but first requests that the College do a benchmarking study comparing themselves against their peer institutions regarding such questions as faculty loads, salaries, alumni support, fraction of university resources spent on engineering, etc. In any benchmarking study, it is important to see whether or not our competition is playing a zero sum game.

Biomedical Engineering

The ECAC feels that this is a very positive initiative and commends the College for reaching across departmental and College boundaries to pull a Whitaker proposal together. The ECAC also commends the College for taking leadership roles in many interdisciplinary efforts across the campus. However, the ECAC would still like to hear how the College can grow a program when there are significant budget cuts. We would like to see a plan for redistributing resources. The ECAC agrees that the Whitaker foundation should not drive Cornell to propose programs that don't fit in with the culture at Cornell. Also, the commitment of the university in this must be solidified.

Singapore Collaboration

The ECAC feels that the proposed collaboration with the National University of Singapore to create an International Center for Disaster Mitigation will bear fruit in the long run. Since Cornell has a good reputation in the East and this program is proceeding at a realistic rate.

Computing and Information Sciences (CIS)

The ECAC commends the panel for doing a great job in laying out the issues. The council is concerned that the organizational structure of CIS has not been adequately dealt with by the university. The inefficiency of the process and the uncertainty of the resolution of the new computing and information sciences structure are not conducive to collaboration, morale or solving the problem. The ECAC is concerned that no thought has gone into the tenure review process for joint appointment faculty. The ECAC needs to encourage the resolution of the CIS issue. It seems clear that the CS students feel part of the Engineering College. A subset of the ECAC is willing to talk to the provost-elect to discuss this issue as well as the financial picture of the College. There is now a unique window of opportunity to develop a positive relationship with the new provost and create new communication channels between the College and the University administration.

e-Cornell

The ECAC supports the general concept of a distance learning entity like e-Cornell, and looks forward to specific goals being articulated. There was discussion concerning whether e-Cornell was to be continuing education, certificate education or degree education. The ECAC suggested that Neil Schilke craft an e-mail to Peter Meinig and Hunter Rawlings supporting the general concept, asking for more specific details, and articulating the importance of the Engineering College being involved and accommodated.

Duffield Hall

The ECAC congratulates the College in pulling together the various stakeholders to get a building space that will raise the quality of the College and Cornell. This effort involved real

team work. We also recommend the College be diligent in identifying potential problems which might derail the effort.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ECAC will take place on October 2-3, 2000.