



College of Engineering Dean's Office

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**Engineering College Council
Meeting Notes**

October 2, 2000

The Engineering College Advisory Council (ECC) met in Ithaca on October 2, 2000. The following ECAC members were present.

J.P. Barger
Jay Carter
Dale Corson
Robert Cowie
Samuel Fuller
Herve Gallaire
Peter Giles
James Hauslein
David Hodges
John Hopcroft
William Hudson
Michael Isaacson

James McCormick
Jack Neafsey
Armando Olivera
Justin Rattner
Rebecca Robertson
John Rodewig
Robert Ryan
Neil Schilke (chair)
William Shreve
Roger Strauch
Sherri Stuewer (co-chair)

Overview of the College (Dean Hopcroft)

The ECC commends the College for making great strides in increasing the diversity among faculty, staff and students. The programs that have been put in place to increase the retention of women and underrepresented minority undergraduates are outstanding. We encourage the College to keep moving in this direction. We support the move to grow computer engineering within electrical engineering and rename the department to Electrical and Computer Engineering to reflect that emphasis. In addition, we commend the College for increasing its interdisciplinary initiatives even though the process is difficult. We encourage the College to continue to look at ways of benchmarking itself against other institutions, including the qualitative comparison of processes where quantitative measures are difficult to determine.

Vision for the University (Provost Martin)

The ECC thanks the Provost for relaying her vision for the university and the emphasis that she is putting on interdisciplinary activities. We appreciate that she is trying to put structures in place to deal with interdisciplinary issues while still keeping the disciplinary structures strong. The Council was somewhat concerned however, that the Provost did not indicate urgency at resolving some of the issues surrounding computer and information science. In particular, while the ECC endorses the concept of a university-wide Faculty for Information Science, we feel it is difficult to separate Computer Science from technology and that the Computer Science Department should reside within the College of Engineering, as it does at most major research universities. The Council would like to emphasize that even though the issues concerning the relationship between Computer Science and the College have not been resolved, the College should make every effort to keep the lines of communication open.

The Council thanks the Provost for providing information regarding the search process for the new Dean, and has offered assistance to the Provost in this search. It has set up a subcommittee to act as liaison with the Dean's Search Committee. This subcommittee consists of Jim McCormick, Sherri Stuewer and Jim Hauslein. The ECC appreciates the willingness of the Provost to listen to comments from the Council regarding issues facing the college and appreciates her offer for us to send such comments to her in the future.

Integrating Modern Biology and Engineering

We appreciate Vice Provost Adler's comments that bioengineering is extremely important to the university, and we endorse the notion that the Provost set up a university-wide committee to further the discussion. The ECC endorses the university's present emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, but emphasizes that there is an urgency to prevent Cornell from being left in the wake of the other major research universities who are moving forward quickly in the area of bioengineering. The ECC endorses the concept of infusing modern biology into engineering, but would like to see a well thought out plan on how this can be done with support from all affected departments. If there is really a zero sum game for the college, then the college needs to look extremely carefully at this issue if it wants to remain strong in its traditional disciplines and also be a major player in bioengineering. The Council would like to see an interim report on this before the spring meeting.

Research, Graduate Studies and Professional Education

The Council is encouraged that the number of students in the graduate programs is increasing. It feels that support for interdisciplinary programs by the use of informal intellectual focus discussion sessions is working and encourages the College to continue this. The council feels that moving the academic oversight of all graduate programs into one office was the right move. It was also noted that the College would like some feedback from the Council on issues and programs related to the pipeline and recruitment of women and underrepresented minorities at the graduate level.

Faculty Development and Training

The ECC commends the College for organizing a teaching effectiveness workshop and endorses the concept to have such workshops on a regular basis. However, we urge the College to evaluate the effectiveness of such workshops. With regards to mentoring programs, the Council feels that more effort still is needed such that mentoring is just a natural extension of a faculty member's duties.

Undergraduate Programs

The ECC applauds the early intervention program that has been set up by the College in order to identify students who may be headed toward academic difficulty. In addition, the Council is upbeat about some of the proposals aimed at increasing recruitment of underrepresented minority students. With regard to preparation for the next ABET review, the ECC would like the College to look at the effort needed to prepare for this review.

Next Meetings

The next meeting of the ECC will take place on April 23-24 and November 5-6. Both spring and fall meetings fall on Monday and Tuesday.