

ECC Chair's Meeting Notes
October 19, 2012

KEY POINTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Question 1: How should we choose topics for ECC discussion? (The current process usually involves a dialog between chairs, me and staff. Note this didn't happen this time because of the transition of chairs and the change to the new ECC guidelines, but we will return to this practice in future meeting, assuming it makes sense.)

Answer: The board overwhelmingly felt that the Dean should select the topics based on the industry experience of his advisory board that would most benefit him. Should the Dean need input on determining exactly which issues or questions to cover during the advisory board meeting, the chair and vice-chair should take responsibility to poll the advisory board members and report back to the Dean well advance of the meeting.

- At some point, members felt that there should some exposure cover to relevant research going on at the College of Engineering and the opportunities to improve its funding. Nevertheless, the board members are anxious to keep the timeframe of the meeting to one day and suggest that these types of "informational" issues be covered during lunch.
- There should be some exposure to the issue of affordability and financial aid opportunities for all students at the College of Engineering.
- Topic should be focused upon areas that the board members industry experience can provide significant insights for the Dean.
- Some topics such as massive online open courses (MOOCS) are so significant that they may span the full day of meeting time.
- Some topics such as "the request for branding thoughts" should be well-defined in advance of the meeting and members should submit their suggestions in advance. Furthermore, topics of this nature could result in ongoing, post-meeting dialogue and there should be some system which would allow for advisory board members to provide input after the meeting.
- Topic should be limited to those areas that are relevant to the industry experience of the advisory board members and should not delve into areas involving internal politics at the University.
- Items such as closing a department would not be good topics unless they could somehow be made relevant to the industry experience of the board members.
- There are some topics such as intellectual property rights "IP" which should include the participation of the Provost or other relevant University leaders.

Question 2: What is the ideal format for the ECC meeting? Do you like the college update the evening before? Do you like the current format of 3 topics on a single theme with time for discussion and feedback? Is there an alternate format that would be preferred?

Answer: The overwhelming view of the advisory board was that the current format works well. Nevertheless, the members also felt that the Dean (assisted by the Chair and Vice Chair) should provide, well in advance of the meeting, the key topics and the relevant questions for which the Dean seeks the board's advice. It was emphasized that the advice of the board channeled through relevant questions for each topic becomes the driving force for this board's mission. Questions could even be simplified into multiple choice answers so that the Dean could get clear direction from his advisory board.

- Some areas, such as technology transfer, warrant integration into a workshop, task force, or other type of long-term committee based advisory format
- It was suggested that we include Deans from some of the other colleges or former Deans from the College of Engineering to assist with providing advice to the Dean during the advisory board meeting.
- Members recommend more interactive time. They feel that past breakout sessions, where questions are explored collaboratively in small groups, are extremely effective and engaging. The board members generally agreed that breakout sessions should include members from other departments and colleges within the University.
- Members would welcome presentations from student project teams, the Kessler fellows, or similar interactions. These sessions could be held in the afternoon before the dinner, in the afternoon following the board meeting, or in the morning during a student breakfast session.
- There was overwhelming support for a "flipped classroom" format for the meeting. It was suggested that members could watch a video presentation by the presenters in advance of the advisory board meeting and prepare their questions and input from that video well in advance of the actual meeting time. Some suggested that the videos be quite short, only of 3 minutes in length. However, others suggested that the full presentation should be delivered, filmed, and viewed in advance.
- There was strong consensus that it is ineffective to provide slide decks in advance, because the members cannot gain enough insight from the slides to provide useful advice. Alternatively, the members suggested that advanced materials include a well-written document.
- Chair's note: we should utilize a website to provide the topics/questions, presentation materials and any videos. In addition, the site should contain links to other relevant videos or papers so that the members can be fully informed in advance of the meeting and therefore are more likely to provide better insight and advice. Here's an example of how Prof. Russ Roberts at his EconTalk podcast website provided background information and other materials on his recent podcast covering the topic "the Internet and education" - please click this link to review this idea:
http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2012/10/kling_on_educat.html

Question 3: How should we report back on the recommendations from the meeting? (I have embedded slides at the end of my update that provide that follow up. In addition, I asked Dawn McWilliams to give email updates over the past few months on the work she has been doing around communications.) Are there other things we should be doing?

Answer: Members felt that their advice was not intended to be "a required action" for the Dean and therefore a report from the Dean on his implementation of the advice is not necessary. (Nevertheless, it is clear that no one would complain to hear what actually transpired after the meeting based on the council's advice). There was unanimous consensus that the ECC is a "council" and not a "board" and that the advisory council members are here to be at the service of the Dean.

- The Council should provide advice to the Dean via a post conference e-mail sent directly to the Dean by the chair after review and consultation with the Vice Chair.
- The Council members' advice should be available on a website and members should be allowed to provide post-meeting comments. Furthermore, such a commenting mechanism would allow for members who were unable to attend the meeting to provide advice and input.
- It was noted that the issues we are addressing are constantly changing and that we are not in a steady-state, particularly with respect to ever-changing economic and University policy influences. As a result, it may be necessary to seek an ongoing conversation with the board as circumstances dictate.
- The Advisory Council provides an external perspective from those found within the College of Engineering, from the students, or within the University administration.
- Should a task force be set up for a specific issue, then it should provide their advice in a report to the Dean.
- The Chair's post-council meeting letter should only address the advice generated during the executive session.
- It was suggested that it would be possible to have a session during the meeting where members of the advisory board presented to the Dean.
- There should be new-member orientation, which could be conducted with either a clear written statement and/or a specific call by the ECC Chair or Vice Chair.

Additional Advice: Following the discussion on the three questions above we turned our attention to providing advice on the issues discussed earlier in the day.

- The Leadership Program should be offered to all students in the College of Engineering.
- Leadership training should be a requirement.
- Project-based learning should be expanded to engage a broad group of the students within the college.
- A website should be set up that allows for reference to ideas from prior ECC meetings.
- The Cornell Outdoor Education program provides an excellent example of how the College of Engineering could provide executive education for a fee and that there is an opportunity for the College of Engineering to partner with companies on these types of experiential learning programs, which could benefit both students and faculty. This may also provide an additional source of revenues to the college.
- There should be some efforts put forth with the ECC to focus on how to commercialize projects for the College of Engineering and Cornell University.
- The ECC should be used to help the Dean define strategy.