BCOE ABET Working Group
Meeting Minutes, January 25, 2008

In attendance: Reza Abbaschian, Laxmi Bhuyan, Bill Bingham, Mitch Boretz, Eamonn Keogh, Roger Lake, Jackie Li, Tom Payne, Amit Roy-Chowdhury, Tim Willette

OUTCOMES: In Computer Science, Victor Hill (who was unable to attend the meeting) is documenting how we use student performance as an input for decisions on how to modify the curriculum. Eamonn Keogh is capturing anecdotal information on how curriculum is being modified. Both are working on information from the fall 2007 quarter now.

Tom Payne commented that the feedback loop looks good as long as we can show e are covering all required outcomes.

The CSE department has hired a student to do number-crunching. The problem is that TAs sometimes do not provide material in the right format, which makes automated number crunching difficult. The EE department would prefer to have a graduate student managing the ABET materials, but the impression is that we can't do this using money set aside for TAs. Laxmi Bhuyan envisions a "head TA" position who works to make sure all TAs, faculty, and lecturers are doing their assessment correctly. He pointed out that the CSE department has a class that trains TAs in classroom techniques. We could assign a TA to that class using TA funds, and this could be the "head TA" that is envisioned.

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK: Mitch Boretz pointed out that some departments (and some of our ABET reviewers from 2006) feel that the assessment framework is too complicated. It is feasible to do a simpler format. However, Mitch pointed out that all departments must do this consistently because the Computer Engineering program and the Materials Science and Engineering program have core courses in multiple departments. It will be impossible to accredit a program that evaluates different core courses using different methodologies. If some departments are committed to keeping the matrices that we have been using, perhaps we can establish a two-tier system: a "baseline" assessment framework that all departments use, and an enhanced system with the matrices that some departments may use at their own discretion. When we are accrediting interdepartmental programs, we will reply only on the baseline material, even if the department has enhanced material available. Roger Lake suggested that the baseline system simply needs to be based on "diagonal" matrices. Mitch Boretz suggested that the undergraduate committee take this up at the upcoming faculty retreat.

PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: On the Objectives, Roger Lake said he is confident that we are doing what we need to do to show stakeholder input. We have changed the Program Educational Objectives for EE; they now are designed to be measurable. The EE advisory board has reviewed and commented on them. The only missing link is alumni; now the department will survey alumni.

It is not clear that departments are doing alumni surveys, and doing them routinely. Reza Abbaschian commented that we can hire undergraduate students to phone alumni. Tom Payne

suggested having focus groups of alumni who are nearby and interviewing them at length, perhaps over pizza, about our program objectives.

COMPUTER ENGINEERING STEERING COMMITTEE: We agreed at an ABET meeting in December 2006 to create a faculty steering committee for Computer Engineering. This has not been done.

NEXT STEPS: The following items were identified for follow-up.

1. Electrical Engineering and the Computer Engineering team will draft the two documents due June 30, 2008, so we can evaluate the extent to which we can document that we are now satisfying ABET's requirements. These drafts should be completed by February 14, 2008, at which time we will schedule another meeting.

2. Determine whether the departments are conducting alumni surveys and, if not, what needs to be done to get this going.

3. Appoint "head TAs" in EE and CSE?

4. Establish a faculty steering committee for Computer Engineering.

5. Place ABET assessment on the undergraduate agenda for the February 2008 faculty retreat.