

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Bourns College of Engineering
January 7, 2009, 1:00 P.M.
A171 Bourns Hall

Attending: Frank Vahid, Chair
Bahman Anvari
Gianfranco Ciardo
Dalia Eldessouky
Christian Shelton
Tom Stahovich
Ertem Tuncel
Charles Wyman

Dean Reza Abbaschian, *ex officio*
Associate Dean Mark Matsumoto, *ex officio*
Associate Dean China Ravishankar, *ex officio*

Rod Smith
Suzanne McCusker

Absent:

1. Call to Order – 1:02pm

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes for the meeting of November 24, 2008 were unanimously approved.

3. Announcements

A. Dean

Reza Abbaschian

- Should have some information on the status of the budget in the next few weeks. Budget discussions have mentioned a stimulus package which includes EBU III which is good news.

B. Associate Deans

China Ravishankar

- The number of undergraduate applications received this year is significantly higher than the number of applications received last year. It is assumed that the combined BS/MS programs have had a significant impact on the increase in applications. Admissions decisions should be made by the end of the month.

-In regard to the Title V grant, permission has been granted to hire two staff positions.

-A proposal for scholarships has been submitted. The preliminary word is that NSF will fund this.

Mark Matsumoto

-It is graduate student recruitment season. Application numbers are up slightly over last year. About 1,200 applications have been received so far.

C. Chair

Frank Vahid

-No announcements

4. Engineering Students' Vital Statistics

-In previous discussion, it has been mentioned that freshman have had low GPA's. It was pointed out that some of the best students that entered as freshman had a large amount of AP/IB credit that could give them enough units to be considered at a junior class standing.

Student Affairs performed a group degree audit of Computer Engineering majors to see where the challenges are for freshman. Consistently PHYS 40B and 40C, ENGL 1B and 1C, and MATH 9C were problem courses.

Student Affairs pulled the transcripts for the first year of the top freshman that entered in Fall 2007. It was found to be a pattern that some of the best students received all "A"s and only "B"s in PHYS 40B.

The grades for PHYS 40B and 40C were pulled for the Spring 2008 quarter. In PHYS 40B, out of 147 students (mostly engineering), only two students received an "A." In PHYS 40C, out of 163 students, 10 received an "A" and 117 students received "C"s. These courses are 5-unit courses and have a large effect on a student's GPA. The fact that only two "A"s were awarded in PHYS 40B seems to be problematic.

It was mentioned that the student consensus is that PHYS 40C is taught horribly and that EE 1A should be taken first in order to get a better understanding of PHYS 40C course material.

Discussion was raised about coming up with a plan to deal with these issues. Engineering students make up 80% of the course enrollments for math, physics, and chemistry. There seems to be quality control issues with math and grading issues with physics. The issue was raised that in the pre-calculus courses, half the course is being taught by professors and the other half is being taught by TA's. The math courses are not being ran well and the Math Department is unwilling to listen to concerns.

It was suggested that the idea of an Intro to Engineering and/or Fundamentals of Engineering course sequence be considered in place of taking these courses from the Math and Physics departments. There was some mixed feelings regarding this idea. A point was made that the experts in these fields should be teaching the courses. Instead of trying to fix it, the college would be taking on the burden to teach everything themselves. It was also mentioned that combining math and physics courses may be too difficult for the students but it was also pointed out that these courses would be offered in a sequence rather than taking them at the same time. On the other hand, it was mentioned students would most likely be happier with a Foundations of Engineering course sequence and issues with retention rates might resolve.

The point was made that the difficulties the college would face with the course sequence are finding faculty lines to teach these sequence courses. The other difficulty mentioned was the political battle. It would be necessary to build evidence that the current method of teaching these courses for engineering students is not working.

Another suggestion was made that the sequence courses could be cross-listed with Engineering and the Math and Physics departments. Cross-listed courses would provide Engineering with more leverage when issues occur, yet not become involved in outside department issues.

It was mentioned that the course sequences could be offered on a trial basis. The committee could make the argument to the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education a need for this course sequence as a means to resolve retention issues. It is important to present the data and express concern. The current freshman program is not working since we are losing two thirds of our freshman. It's important to make the point that instruction needs to be taught from a different viewpoint.

It was decided that the committee will look into what other universities are doing to integrate freshman courses. The committee will examine what was experienced in creating the integrated courses and how they overcame the obstacles faced at these universities.

5. New/Continued Business

A. Foundations of Engineering Course Sequence

- This agenda item was discussed along with Engineering Students' Vital Statistics.

B. Photo Rosters

- For the past two to three years, the Computer Science and Engineering Department has had access to student photos taken for ID cards. Each instructor could see pictures of each student on their class rosters. Having the ability to see student photos on the rosters helped instructors to learn their students faster. Another advantage of having access to the student photos was that it insured only enrolled students were attending the course.

The Computer Science and Engineering Department has lost access to these photos. Christian Shelton will look into why photos are no longer being offered. It was mentioned that Chuck Rowley might have some information and how to reinstate the access. It was also mentioned it might be a good idea to ask Campus Counsel Michele Coyle if there are any legal issues with having access to the photos on the rosters.

Other departments would like to have the ability to see student photos on their rosters as well.

C. Teaching Evaluations

-Michele Coyle, UCR Campus Counsel attended the last Executive Committee meeting to discuss the legal ramifications with making teaching evaluations public information. The committee was asked what they would like to do.

Students Unite is actively looking into posting evaluations as well and is interested in developing a separate evaluation system. It was discussed that the system could be handled completely by the students that would consist of questions tailored for students by students. This would be done separately from the standard in-class evaluations. It was mentioned that as an incentive to get students to participate, access to the evaluations can be given to only the students that complete them.

It was discussed that this evaluation system could be used by students instead of the non-controlled sites such as pickaprof.com. The information would be controlled and accurate, but not the official record for personnel files.

An evaluation system managed by the students would be supported by the College of Engineering and would most likely also solve some of the problems regarding evaluations.

Pending Items Update

Course Approval Process – It was learned that Committee on Courses will reject any courses that are not submitted in final format. Typos will cause a course proposal to be rejected. It was mentioned that Committee on Courses could be bypassed by a petition of at least five senate members to go straight to the next senate committee meeting. The Registrar, Bracken Dailey is planning to contact the Committee on Courses chair regarding how to implement the changes.

Limiting Admissions to Increase Retention – Enrollment will be kept the same since the college is not receiving an increase in resources for admits. It was mentioned that the committee might want to consider the possibility of an Engineering Prep program. Such a program would be for students that are put on notice before actually leaving the college. It would help to put students become aware to improve math scores. It would also help with the college retention rates by creating Engineering Prep for the students in difficulty. This topic will be looked into further, and will remain on the Pending Items list as “Engineering Prep.”

Student FTE Generation – This item was removed, but might be revisited after the budget crisis.

CEP Review – Not necessary for programs with rigorous external accreditation - The Executive Committee Chair will draft an email to send to CEP for their consideration.

CEP Investigation of CS evening courses – removed from pending items.

Confusion Between College and Vice Provost Student Affairs Offices – removed from pending items.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00p.m.