

**College of Engineering
Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2010**

The meeting was called to order by the Council Chair at 3 pm. In attendance were:

Susan Sinnott, Chair
Dave Bloomquist, Secretary
Oscar Crisalle
Wolfgang Sigmund
David Hahn
R. Keith Stanfill
Paul Gader
Mark Orazem
Gijs Bosman
James Klausner
Ghatu Subhash
Lou Cattafesta

Guests: Cammy Abernathy, Bill Heitman

The Chair distributed the Agenda and asked for any additions.

Agenda

1. Approval of minutes for December
2. Items from the floor
3. Discussion of college affairs with Dean Abernathy
4. Overhead return discussion with Bill Heitman
5. Updates from Council sub-committees:
 - a. Constitution revision (James, Wolfgang, Oscar)
 - b. COE RCM (Mark, David Hahn, Lily, Gijs, Dave Bloomquist)
 - c. Faculty code of conduct (Oscar, David Hahn, Tony, Paul)

ITEM 1. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES. The minutes were not approved, due to a member remarking that an item regarding the Opportunity Fund Subcommittee was not included. The Secretary will re-check the recording and if required, amend the minutes for an electronic vote at a later date.

ITEM 2. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR. There were no additions to the Agenda.

ITEM 3. DISCUSSION OF COLLEGE AFFAIRS WITH DEAN ABERNATHY.

The Dean presented an overview of the "School" concept. Basically a School would be created and charged with managing the budget of the two participating Departments. In this case, CCE and EES are being considered as a School of Sustainable Infrastructure. She said several other Colleges on campus already have them or are forming them.

The Departments remain intact, the School Director would be in charge of finances, faculty evaluations, staff (with some sharing) and services. The Department Chairs would become Department Heads and focus on the curriculum (accreditation, degree requirements, etc.). This is analogous to the current Associate Chairs' duties. The important aspect of this model is that faculty rights are not diluted - T&P, degree requirements, etc. would remain within each Department. This model also correlates well with the COE's Strategic Plans and might result in the formation of a Center or Institute (under the School) that addresses one of the Plan's goals. This would facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary research. The Director would be evaluated on how well he or she manages and supports the Departments and Institute(s).

One Council member asked about other Department faculty getting involved in an Institute that is not directly linked to their particular Department. Cammy said anyone is encouraged to participate in any Institute, and its success is the responsibility of the Director. In the past, Centers were created and their Directors spent excessive time on H.R. related, rather than technical issues. Having the School assume these duties would relieve the Director to focus on research.

Another concern was raised that the Director might allocate more money to one Department or the Institute. Again, the Dean said if any one of the entities falter, the Director would probably be out of a job.

The question was asked, why not simply merge departments? Cammy said if both parties agreed it would be fine with her. But currently, one Department fears losing its identity and visibility if it were to merge. The School concept is a way to assuage those concerns. And, like Mechanical and Aero, if in the future a merger is desired, then that is fine.

She also said an emerging national trend is joint hires - which would serve the School's Institute.

She then discussed the Pros and Cons.

PROS.

- With regards to CCE and EES, combining their numbers (students, publications, research funding, etc.) would rank the School equal to or better than the top peer institutions, (Berkeley, Texas, Illinois) in terms of productivity. She noted that all these Universities have combined CCE and ENE Departments. In addition, under RCM, the liaison would make a more robust entity and would fare better separately (e.g., a smaller Department might incur cash flow/reserve issues).
- They would each retain their Department identity.

- Federal funding agencies would likely be more interested in green proposals from a large School of Sustainability as opposed to one from CCE or EES. Interdisciplinary research could be coordinated.
- Services would be enhanced. The rationale is not about saving money, but providing better more efficient services to faculty (grants, travel, etc.).
- We have a better chance of reaching the top 10 being a larger, more productive School compared to separate Departments.
- Academics could be improved. Possibility of combining/sharing courses and curricula coordination (teaching loads, assignments, etc.). The CCE external advisory board is very supportive of the concept.
- More attractive to prospective students as an interdisciplinary academic environment.
- The possibility of collocation of interested School's faculty would likely foster combined research. Collocating graduate students would also be beneficial (sharing seminars).

One member spoke about the MAE merger and the difficulties in breaking down the “fences” within each department.

CONS.

- Relocating is inconvenient.
- The perception of a loss of tradition, e.g., - the Phelps Lab, which will need to be replaced. However, its name can live on as a new building.
- Loss of local control. The smaller depts. could feel that faculty voting rights over curricular issues and T&P would be lost. However, in the School model, these rights are undiluted.

There was some discussion about how will the Dean evaluate the Director's performance, i.e., what metrics would be used? Cammy said the Strategic Planning groups are looking into this issue.

Another point brought up was might the Director be too far removed to write the T&P letters? The Dean said she didn't think this would be a problem, citing the MAE Chair writing Aero letters.

There would be a combined search committee for the Director.

There was a discussion on why couldn't the Dean simply mandate the changes to the Departments, rather than creating a structural change to the College.

Her timeline is in late February when the two Depts. will vote on this concept.

On another topic, summer salaries for teaching (from the E&G allocation) will be spread out over the year so a person can still write proposals and supervise students at the same time they are being supported by funding agencies . This is a bookkeeping exercise.

The last item involves the new collective bargaining agreement, in that the COE must adopt a summer pay scale by March 15th or else the Dean must impose a scale. She wants Mark L. and the Council to come up with a proposal for a COE faculty vote. If it is rejected, then she will maintain the current summer salary process for this year.

A question was raised about how the Dean should communicate with the Council on ongoing processes (for example a Dept Chair search). The Constitution requires that the Dean consult with the Council on searches and issues that impact faculty.

ITEM 4. OVERHEAD RETURN DISCUSSION WITH BILL HEITMAN. Bill discussed IDC return funding changes. He distributed a document showing the current and the proposed method. Basically it will go to a quarterly allocation based on what was earned as opposed to what was the anticipated earnings based on the prior year. In the past, this caused problems if funding turned out to be less than the overhead return and had already been distributed and spent.

In addition, new hires do not receive any return their first year, so they effectively lose one year of overhead that is never recouped.

He provided some ideas on how the Administration was going to reconcile those PIs in the red. Currently the "red" amounts to \$281k. This is also now problematic since the Dean must come up with large start up packages (~\$500k) for the new hires.

A member asked Bill if he could find information on the issue of summer salaries vis-à-vis faculty being paid 100% from a grant and then only being allowed to work on it and not advise graduate students, write papers, etc.

He said he was at an audit and reaffirmed that federal entities do not want faculty working on other things when being paid by them. They feel it amounts to fraud. Bill will look into it for the Council.

Susan mentioned that her colleague at Vanderbilt was audited by NSF and told she could not advise students, etc. while being paid by them.

Oscar asked for the Council's approval for him to send a message to the COE faculty tell them that we are planning on making revisions to the COE Constitution and if they have any comments or suggestions to forward them to Oscar. A motion was made for him to proceed, it was seconded and passed unanimously.

Who is supposed to send it out? At the last moment, the decision was for the Council Secretary to send it out.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm

Respectfully submitted

Dave Bloomquist

Secretary, F.C.