

School of Engineering - Faculty Meeting Minutes

September 22nd, 2023

Richard Weeks Hall of Engineering, room 105

Present: E K Akdogan, W Bajwa, P Balaguru, K Barillas, M Baykal-Gursoy, H Benaroya, S Berg, O Bilgen, M Brown, H Buettner, D Burbano, J Cadena, P Calderon, K Cameron, F Celik, K Cook-Chennault, A Cuitiño, E DeMauro, V Demetracopoulou, E Elsayed, A Ezzat, Z Gajic, H Gea, M Golden, X Gu, N Gucunski, A Guo, Q Guo, W Guo, Y Guo, S Haghani, D Hildebrandt, M Jafari, S Kilduff, L Klein, D Knight, D Kruger, K Kyker-Snowman, D Lambropoulos, N Langrana, Y Li, H Liu, J Lynch, R Mieth, C Miller, L Najafizadeh, H Najm, A Norris, T Oathes, D O'Carroll, T Ozel, D Ozolina, A Pelegri, H Pham, M Pierce, H Pedersen, R Reagan, A Reihani, D Reed, R Riman, D Rider, I Rosen, C Roth, A Safari, A Scacchioli, C Schroeder, D Shreiber, R Sills, P Song, W Trappe, S Tse, V Tutwiler, H Wang, R Wang, S Wei, G Weng, E Wicks, N Vlassis, Y-K Yong, F Yousefian, Z Xi, J Zahn.

Associate Dean Wade Trappe called the meeting to order at 2:38 pm, serving as presiding officer until Dean Alberto Cuitiño's arrival.

- **New Faculty and Staff:**
 - SoE faculty extended a warm welcome to new colleagues: Yalin Li (CEE), Vassiliki Demetracopoulou (CEE), Kelly Kyker-Snowman (BME), Anandi Krishnan (BME), Matt Horvath (BME), Elaine Connors (BME), Diane Hildebrandt (CBE), Ashley Guo (CBE), Robert Mieth (ISE), Nikolaos Vlassis (MAE), Christopher Miller (MAE), Steven Berg (MAE), Cassandra Schroeder (MAE), Dov Kruger (ECE), Sasan Haghani (ECE), Demetrios Lambropoulos (ECE), Zhao Zhang (ECE), Aggelos Bletsas (ECE), Hang Liu (ECE), Katie Barillas (SoE)
 - Promotions for the following faculty were recognized: Adam Gormley (BME), Ravendra Singh (CBE), Alex Bertuccio (CBE), Hao Wang (CEE), Sheng Wei (ECE), Predrag Spasojevic (ECE), Mehdi Javanmard (ECE), Emina Soljanin (ECE), Annalisa Scacchioli (MAE), Ashutosh Goel (MSE).

- **Report – Business & Planning:**
 - Susan Kilduff introduced staff members David Rider and Dace Ozolina. Vice Dean Kilduff noted that the school has completed its role in close out of FY23 accounting. In FY23, the school's grant revenue exceeded budgeted and forecast values while gift revenues also came in above estimated levels.
 - The business office has completed FY23 federal fringe reimbursement to eligible PIs, amounting to a total of \$1.2m.

- FY24 federal fringe levels have been reduced, offering some flexibility in budget reallocation.
- On faculty, postdoc, and graduate student raises agreed in recent contract negotiations, the difference between what should have been budgeted in grant applications (3% per year) and the agreed-upon levels will be covered by taking funds from ICR and department budgets. If these sources cannot cover these salary gaps, a request can be made for relief from the Chancellor's office.
- Report – Academic Programs:
 - Wade Trappe explained that state funding will allow for a reduction in the fringe rate on federal grants. It remains to be determined whether similar relief will arise for projects funded through the state or foundations.
 - The school's full self-study document for ABET accreditation will be completed by the end of this year. Faculty are requested to help and support their department teams in collecting and organizing data for the report. A mock visit will occur next summer with the full ABET team visit in fall 2024.
 - Associate Dean Trappe's office is building a system to gather and organize information on SoE faculty research interests.
- Report – Graduate & Professional Education:
 - Hae Chang Gea reviewed master's enrollment in the school since 2018, noting a decline in recent years. The school aims to increase the ratio of master's to PhD students from the current level of around 1:1 toward 2:1. A target of enrolling 1,000 master's students in fall 2028 was stated.
 - To stimulate master's degree enrollment, specialized concentrations (e.g. packaging, energy systems, pharmaceutical), and certificate programs (e.g. cybersecurity, machine learning, robotics,...) will continue to be emphasized. New professional and interdisciplinary MEng degrees will be offered.
 - A new school-wide MS degree in sustainable engineering has been proposed and is currently pending approval from the School of Graduate Studies. The aim is to enroll new students into this program in fall 2024.
- Report – Undergraduate Education:
 - Peng Song expressed thanks to undergraduate directors, administrators, and deans for helping students register for classes at the start of the academic year.
 - In spring 2023, the school graduated the largest class in its history, conferring 1,042 bachelor's degrees. In fall 2023, the school welcomed its largest ever first year class of 1,060 freshmen, including 293 female engineers (~28%), a level significantly above the national average.

- Report – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
 - Kimberly Cook-Chennault explained that ABET criteria 4 & 5 look at student exposure to diverse, inclusive pedagogy. The school aims to capture data in this area for our evaluators to advise if we’re on track or need to make changes.
 - The school will require all faculty and staff to receive STRIDE (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) training every three years, to promote inclusive hiring practices.
 - The US Supreme Court’s recent ruling on affirmative action stated that race cannot be used as a factor in college admissions. However, the ruling does not refer to engaging diverse student populations through other mechanisms, meaning that fellowships, pedagogy, and outreach programs are not affected.
- Committee Report – Rules of Procedure Committee:
 - Committee chair Waheed Bajwa introduced a proposed amendment to section VI.G of the school’s bylaws (term of office of [department] chairpersons). The proposed amendment originated from an individual faculty member and underwent revisions in response to feedback from SoE faculty. The final form of the proposed amendment read: *“SoE departments should explicitly state term limits for their chairperson in their bylaws. In the absence of term limits in departmental bylaws, a maximum of three consecutive terms will apply. In extraordinary circumstances, the Dean can make an exception with justification.”*
 - Several faculty provided comments and opinions on the proposed amendment.
 - In accordance with section VII of the school’s bylaws, a secret ballot was conducted, with 28 faculty voting to approve the proposed amendment, 25 voting to not approve, and 8 abstaining. The number of votes in favor did not meet the two-thirds threshold required to amend the SoE bylaws.
- Dean Cuitiño noted that the school’s annual Medal of Excellence Alumni Awards dinner will be held on Thursday, September 28th. A reception will be held in Richard Weeks Hall honoring this year’s recipient, John Sharkey (BS ’79, MS ’90), and SoE alumni.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark C. Pierce

Secretary, Engineering Faculty