

## **School of Engineering - Faculty Meeting Minutes**

**November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Richard Weeks Hall of Engineering, room 105**

*Present:* W Bajwa, P Balaguru, H Benaroya, D Birnie, H Buettner, K Cameron, Y Chen, K Cook-Chennault, A Cuitiño, E DeMauro, V Demetracopoulou, E Elsayed, J Freeman, Z Gajic, N Gucunski, X Gu, Y Guo, M Jafari, Y Jaluria, S Jha, S Kilduff, L Klein, D Knight, N Langrana, Y Li, M Liu, N Mandayam, A Mann, G Markand, R Mieth, H Najm, T Oathes, T Ozel, D Ozolina, A Pelegri, M Pierce, A Reihani, D Reed, C Roth, A Scacchioli, R Sills, J Singer, P Song, M Sorensen, M Striki, S Tse, S Wei, G Weng, E Wicks, G Yang, Z Xi, J Zahn.

Dean Alberto Cuitiño called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

- **Announcement:**
  - Engineering Governing Council (EGC) events co-chair Saranya Guttikonda provided information on the ongoing fall food drive (deadline extended to November 30<sup>th</sup>). Items can be dropped off at collection boxes in each department, or monetary donations can be made to the Student Food Pantry.
  - Full details can be found on Instagram @ruegc.
- **New Staff:**
  - Maria Sorensen introduced Gabrielle Markand as the school's new Director of Development, and Ashley Rappaport as Associate Director of Development.
  - Dean Cuitiño welcomed Shefali Patel to the Dean's office, specializing in post-award grant administration.
- **Dean's Report:**
  - The SoE faculty awards reception will be held at 4pm on Monday November 20<sup>th</sup>, in Richard Weeks Hall, Concepts lab (room 111). The recipients of the 2023-24 awards are:
    - Elsayed A. Elsayed (Faculty of the Year)
    - Hao Wang & Anand Sarwate (Outstanding Engineering Faculty)
    - Jingang Yi (Peter D. Cherasia Faculty Scholar Award)
    - Ahmed Aziz Ezzat (A. Walter Tyson Assistant Professorship Award)
    - Ellis H. Dill (Dean's Lifetime Achievement award)

- The Faculty Compensation Program (FCP) process is ongoing, with Peer Evaluation Committees (PEC's) formed in each department. Departments will soon begin collecting material from eligible faculty and proceed through the assessment process.
  - Dean Cuitiño discussed sponsored award transactions from data available in RAPSS. The total numbers of awards and value of awards received for FY2020 to FY2024 were compared for both the full fiscal year and fiscal year-to-date. The data indicate that the total value of awards is trending back to historical levels after a decline in FY23.
  - The number and value of grant submissions recorded in the fiscal year to-date are approximately 10-11% lower than at the same point 1 year ago. A challenge for faculty is to complete FY24 with the total number of submissions at or exceeding the FY23 level.
  - Dean Cuitiño noted that lowering the costs associated with supporting graduate assistants (stipend, fringe, tuition, and fees), would contribute to increasing the school's research competitiveness. The recent reduction in fringe rate on federal grants was a welcome development and the school remains hopeful that a similar change will be applied to grants awarded by the state and other sources. A new initiative introduced by the school will be to cover one semester of tuition for every three years they are supported on grant funding.
  - Dean Cuitiño reiterated that the school's graduate student (master's and PhD) enrollment is not growing. The school aims to address this challenge by better aligning our programs with the needs of students. A proposal for a new interdisciplinary masters ("PRIME") proposal has been submitted to SGS.
  - Preparation for the school's ABET review is ongoing. An external consultant is continuing to work with department teams. The importance of a successful ABET review in 2024 was emphasized.
  - On the topic of undergraduate applications, Dean Cuitiño informed faculty that Rutgers has begun using Common App ([commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org)) to receive student applications. This platform allows students to submit applications to participating institutions through a single portal, streamlining their submission of application materials. To-date, Rutgers has seen significant increases in applications among SoE first year applicants (+72.6%), out-of-state students (+156%), international students (+135%), and New Jersey residents (+37%). How this will affect enrollment remains unclear at this stage, but there is the potential to broaden the school's geographic recruiting and increase academic performance metrics among the entering class in fall 2024.
- Undergraduate Education (Peng Song):
    - The school's undergraduate enrollment figures were presented. Increases were observed between 2014 (3,604 total undergraduates, 767 first years) and 2023 (3,903 total, 1,055 first years). Under-represented minority student numbers

and numbers of women in engineering have both risen steadily during the same 10-year period.

- The number of bachelor's degrees awarded in 2023 (1,042) demonstrated a strong recovery after declines in 2022 and 2021, potentially attributed to COVID.
- The school is developing new initiatives to enhance the 1st year engineering experience. Central to this is reforming the current 1st year Intro to Engineering (440:100) / Intro to Computers (440:127) sequence. These 4-credits will be replaced by new fall / spring courses named ID3EA (440:101), ID3EA II (440:102), for 2-credits each. These new courses will include a 55-minute lecture, an 80-minute recitation period, and an 80-minute community activity / programming session, each week. The timeline for this new course sequence aims to begin in the fall 2024 semester.
- Business & Planning (Sue Kilduff):
  - The SoE previously retained *Hanover Research* to conduct a review of the environment for the proposed interdisciplinary master's program. Their report benchmarks Rutgers University against other programs and peer institutions. Recommendations include integration with programs outside engineering and expansion of existing programs within engineering. The school should leverage current areas of strength (e.g. AI, pharma, cybersecurity...), while coordinating with individual departments on content. A regional needs assessment will be conducted and used to develop a marketing plan.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence (Kimberly Cook-Chennault):
  - Emails have been sent to faculty with reminders on requirements for STRIDE training. All faculty must complete the training every 3 years, while faculty involved in recruitment must complete the training each year in which they serve in a recruiting capacity. Annual in-person training programs are provided each year with online options for those who can't attend.
  - The vice provost is asking for a report on the school's DEI activities. Faculty are requested to enter related activities in a shared Excel worksheet.
- Dean Cuitiño informed faculty that the first meeting in 2024 will be an extended meeting to discuss the current status and future plans for the school. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for 2/9/24 and all faculty are encouraged to attend.
  - The Dean's end of year reception will be held on 12/15/23 at 3:30pm.
- Old business:
  - Tuğrul Özel informed attendees that he was the individual faculty member responsible for initiating the proposed amendment to the SoE bylaws that was voted on at the previous faculty meeting on 9/22/23.



With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark C. Pierce".

Mark C. Pierce

Secretary, Engineering Faculty