School of Engineering - Faculty Meeting Minutes  
October 30th, 2020  
Online Meeting (Webex)


Dean Thomas N. Farris called the meeting to order at 3:04pm.

No objections were raised concerning the minutes of the Faculty Meeting held on September 11th, 2020, nor on the agenda of the current meeting.

- Dean’s Report:
  - Dean Farris noted that daylight saving time ends on Sunday November 1st and that faculty should be conscious that the time adjustment may impact online scheduling with students located across various time zones.
  - The New Brunswick Faculty Council issued a statement suggesting “… that faculty consider not holding exams on or requiring papers due on the day after the presidential election nor during the rest of the week”. This statement was circulated via email to faculty by Peng Song on 10/12/20.
  - Dean Farris reiterated his appreciation for efforts by the faculty in transitioning their teaching to the online setting.
  - The School of Engineering will host ENGage, a virtual gathering and networking event on Thursday, November 19th from 5:30pm – 7:00pm EST. President Holloway will join the event to raise critical funds to support student needs. Industry partners have assisted in raising $115,000 to-date for this fund. Full details can be found at https://soe.rutgers.edu/event/rutgers-engage.
  - The university campaign planning is ongoing, in consultation with department chairs and advisory boards. Goals of the School of Engineering include proceeding with phase 2 of the precinct plan and build-out of the Fiber Optics building.
  - Dean Farris announced a $520,000 gift to the school from John Sharkey (ENG ’79, GSNB ’90) to fund the Elsayed A. Elsayed Endowed Scholarship, aimed at supporting underrepresented and in-need students. ISE chair Elsayed Elsayed described his relationship with Mr. Sharkey, whom he taught and mentored
during his time in the department of industrial and systems engineering. Additional details can be found at https://support.rutgers.edu/news-stories/apt-pupil-pays-it-forward/.

- Kimberly Cook-Chennault met last week with faculty that have shown an interest in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence Committee. Additional faculty interested in joining this committee are encouraged to contact Prof. Cook-Chennault. Dean Farris noted that the National Academy of Engineering recently established a committee on Racial Justice and Equity, chaired by Percy A. Pierre (University of Maryland), as described at https://www.nae.edu/239051/NAE-Announces-Committee-on-Racial-Justice-and-Equity-

- The School of Engineering’s undergraduate enrollment numbers have been shared with department chairs. 891 freshmen are currently enrolled, with total undergraduate enrollment currently at 3914, slightly below recent levels of > 4000. This drop is attributed largely to a reduction in enrollment of international students. An increase in enrollment among black students to around 6% of the undergraduate engineering population compares favorably to the national average of 4%.

- Dean Farris advised that the school remains under a hiring freeze due to budgetary challenges.

- Dean Farris expressed appreciation to professors Aaron Mazzeo, Nicole Fahrenfeld, and Onur Bilgen for discussing their research in the Engineering Virtual Speaker Series. Archived video presentations can be found at https://soe.rutgers.edu/alumni-events

- Dean Farris mentioned Chancellor Strom’s recent remarks to the school’s industrial advisory board and highlighted efforts by multiple SoE faculty to contribute to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic through engineering solutions for local hospitals.

- Open Discussion

  - Dean Farris invited faculty to share any thoughts and concerns. Comments largely focused on challenges and opportunities presented by the shift to remote learning. These included:

    o Whether students are genuinely learning and retaining knowledge delivered in the online setting

    o Levels of interaction and engagement between students and instructors through online platforms (Zoom, Webex, BigBlueButton etc.)

    o Concern over academic integrity and use of tools such as ProctorTrack (it should be noted that ProctorTrack is no longer in use at Rutgers and the Office of Information Technology is recommending use of Respondus as an alternative option: https://canvas.rutgers.edu/documentation/external-apps/rldb-monitor-instructors/).
Opportunities for new pedagogical approaches in instruction and assessment (eg. flipped classrooms)

Ilene Rosen provided a useful link to resources to support remote instruction at https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity. Additional material has been developed by the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR) at https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/16464.

- Old Business
  - None

- New Business
  - None

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Pierce
Secretary, Engineering Faculty