School of Engineering - Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 16th, 2021

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 October 30th, 2020, nor on the agenda of the current meeting.

- Dean’s Report:
  - The Dean’s Office is looking for volunteers to come and help give out Senior gifts, Honors Cords, and Stoles during drive-through events planned for Tuesday April 27th from 11:00am – 2:00pm and Tuesday May 4th from 2:00pm – 5:00pm. Faculty or staff interested in participating should contact Kendra for scheduling.
  - Work continues on the SoE precinct plan. Bidding will open on Wednesday April 21st for construction of the Bruce and Phyllis Nicholas Engineering Student Projects Studio. This space is scheduled for completion by May 2022. Plans for building out the Fiber Optics building to create space for decanting the Engineering C-wing have been completed and are currently under review by estimators and facilities.
  - At the April 16th Board of Governors meeting, multiple reappointments and promotions were approved for faculty within the School of Engineering.
  - Dean Farris advised that Dean Kukor will be stepping down as Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Prabhas Moghe’s office will initiate a Committee on Academic Planning (CAP) review of the School of Graduate Studies. SoE faculty are encouraged to provide input to this review process.
  - Rutgers New Brunswick Provost Francine Conway has requested that each academic unit perform a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. Conversations on this topic are underway with the department chairs.
  - Dean Farris expressed thanks to Kimberly Cook-Chennault for serving as Chair of the school’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence (DEIE) Committee. Prof.
Cook-Chennault and SoE leadership recently met with student leaders from organizations including the Minority Engineering Educational Task (MEET), the Society of Hispanic Engineers (SHE), the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE), and the Engineering Governing Council (EGC).

- Provost Conway will join the next SoE faculty meeting on May 7th to discuss the collaborative on academic careers in higher education (COACHE) survey and related outcomes.

- Dean Farris thanked faculty and staff for their ongoing efforts in planning for the fall academic semester. The requirement for on-campus students to provide verification of COVID-19 vaccination (with selected exemptions) was noted. Challenges in meeting this requirement for specific student groups including international students were outlined by Henrik Pedersen, with the recognition that plans continue to evolve.

• Open Discussion

- George Shoane recommended that each chair share some news from their respective departments. A brief summary follows:
  
  o BME (David Shreiber): Faculty promotions were noted. An undergraduate team recently won the Rice University Global Health Technologies Design Competition. The department is planning for predominantly in-person instruction for undergraduates and mostly remote instruction for graduate students in the fall semester.
  
  o CBE (Helen Buettner): Faculty promotions were noted. An uptick in students applying to the BS/MS program was observed. Particular interest in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology from graduate program applicants may lead to new research and teaching opportunities.
  
  o CEE (Nenad Gucunski): The department anticipates predominantly in-person instruction in the fall semester. The department is in ongoing discussions with the school of environmental and biological sciences (SEBS) to form a new graduate program.
  
  o ECE (Narayan Mandayam): Faculty member Kirsten Dana is the PI for a NSF Research Traineeship grant entitled SOCRATES: Socially Cognizant Robotics for a Technology Enhanced Society. A new faculty search is ongoing. A large incoming sophomore class is anticipated to present challenges due to COVID-19 related restrictions.
  
  o ISE (Mohsen Jafari): The department has a new YouTube channel highlighting accomplishments and ongoing projects. A new online MEng program will begin in fall 2022. The department has seen a strong recruiting season, especially among master’s students. A student team recently won the IISE regional competition.
  
  o MSE (Lisa Klein): Faculty promotions were noted. Students remain successful at securing internships and REU placements. Two projects
in the department received TechAdvance funding, with additional projects receiving support from the NSF, DARPA, and DoD young investigator program.

- ME (Alberto Cuitino): Faculty promotions were noted. New research funding on COVID-19 from the NIH RADx program was highlighted. The AIAA Northeast Regional Student Paper competition, hosted by Rutgers, was the largest of any of the regional competitions. Rutgers University placed 3rd in the M.S. category, 1st and 3rd in the team category, and 3rd in the undergraduate category.

- Old Business
  - None

- New Business
  - None

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Pierce
Secretary, Engineering Faculty