

**University of Delaware
Engineering College Advisory Council Meeting
December 4-5, 2008**

Summary

Nine members of the Engineering College Advisory Council met to review the progress of the College and offer comments to Dean Michael Chajes and guest speakers. Council members in attendance were Kurt Akeley, Uma Chowdhry, Richard Emmert, Gerald Estes, Raymond Harbeson, David Helwig, William Mavity, Terry Neimeyer, and Rodman Steele. Because Michael Bowman, the Council chair, could not attend, an acting chair (Kurt Akeley) was selected for this meeting.

After acting as Dean since the departure of Eric Kaler in October of 2007, Michael Chajes was appointed as Dean on July 1, 2008. Following dinner on Thursday evening Michael gave the Council a brief update, emphasizing new faculty, faculty awards, new grants, and new centers. The committee met Friday morning with Michael, and also heard brief reports from Jingguang Chen (head of the new Energy Institute), Armand Battisti (newly hired development manager), and Marty Parsons (newly hired CFO for the college). The bulk of the meeting concerned the college strategic plan, which was requested by university President Pat Harker earlier this year. This discussion was led by Tom Buchanan, who headed the committee that developed the plan. After lunch with Michael and Tom, the Council met for 75 minutes with the President and with Provost Daniel Rich.

Feedback on Progress Since the May 2008 Meeting

Good progress has been made since the Special ECAC Meeting held in May of this year. Michael made several key hires. The college Director of Development position, long vacant, was filled by Armand Battisti, who has almost 30 years of development experience, most recently at the Winterthur Museum. Marty Parsons filled the newly-created Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration position. Marty's experience with Responsibility-Based Budgeting at the University of Michigan will be valuable as the University of Delaware converts to this budgeting approach at the end of the 2008/2009

year. Professor David Martin, currently at the University of Michigan, will join the college as Chair of the Materials Science and Engineering Department in August of 2009.

The Council commends Michael for his efforts to rationalize the organization of the college administration, to communicate more effectively within the college through the use of monthly e-mail summaries, and his efforts at outreach, both within the College (for example, by gathering student input to drive the development of the strategic plan) and beyond (for example, by his visits to universities in Taiwan and Korea). Overall Michael has followed up well on the concerns expressed by the Council during its May 2008 meeting.

Feedback on Engineering College Strategic Plan

The Path to Prominence presents a great opportunity for the College. The Council is particularly excited by the support of the President to grow the College of Engineering substantially (perhaps to twice its current size), and to encourage a possible merger of the Computer Information Systems department into the College of Engineering, from its current location in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Council believes the resulting synergies could be of substantial benefit to both the College and the University. Prompt integration would support the education component of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) opportunity presented by the relocation of Army operations from Ft. Monmouth NJ to Aberdeen MD, for example.

Significant progress is evident on the College of Engineering strategic plan, though it remains a work in progress. The five initiatives provide a framework for soliciting and organizing specific proposals. Executing on the opportunity presented by the Path to Prominence will require, however, that decisions of what to do and, more importantly, what not to do, be made promptly. To better understand this aspect of the plan the Council asked Tom Buchanan to explain what top-level initiatives were considered and rejected during the committee's discussions. Dr. Buchanan reported that most of the suggested ideas were incorporated into the plan, either as initiatives or within the initiatives. The Council believes and recommends that:

1. Specific plans and actions within the structure of the College strategic plan should be identified as soon as is feasible.
2. The scope of the College strategic plan may need to be narrowed if it is to provide an effective framework to facilitate the selection or rejection of future specific goals and actions.

The first issue will naturally be addressed as the strategic plan is advanced to a “fourth level” of specificity by soliciting specific proposals from the engineering departments and incorporating them into the plan.

The Council strongly supports the emerging bio-engineering program (including the related consortium) and the UD Energy Institute (with specific derivative activities) as high-priority components of the final strategic plan.

Finally, the Council also notes that the vision of the College of Engineering, “to contribute to a vibrant intellectual culture at UD,” expresses an action rather than a vision of a future state. It was suggested that a description of specific states at a specific time would be a more effective vision statement.

Looking Forward

The next year will be pivotal for the College, as fundamental decisions about programs and goals are made and formulated into strategic and business plans, to be complete at the end of the academic year. In this difficult financial environment it will also be critical to focus on near-term opportunities, such as BRAC collaboration and education. The Council has expressed its willingness to assist throughout the year, and has been promised regular updates by the Dean. We look forward to a productive interaction, culminating in an Autumn 2009 meeting during which progress is reviewed and specific near-term commitments are made.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Akeley

Council Chairman (acting)