Minutes  
Engineering Faculty Council  
Meeting # 4, September 13, 2005

1. The meeting was called to order by Professor Collins at 10:30 am in 3511 SC

Members present: C. Beckermann, J. Reinhardt, S. Collins, S. Rahman and W. Krajewski

Invited Guest: Professor John Lee, MIE

Deans present: none

2. Professor Collins made three announcements. (1) Professor Soura Dasgupta, ECE, has agreed to serve on the EFC Promotion and Tenure Committee; (2) Professor C. Allan Guymon, CBE, has agreed to serve on the EFC Teaching Committee; (3) Prof. Udaykumar will be on leave in spring 2006 but is willing to continue to contribute to the work of the Teaching Committee.

3. Professor John Lee, Chair of the EFC Teaching Committee last year, briefly presented the main findings of the 2004-05 Teaching Committee report regarding academic dishonesty. The Committee recommended establishing a Task Force to address the problems of plagiarism and cheating. During the discussion that ensued following the presentation, all meeting participants agreed that in their experience plagiarism and cheating constitutes a problem in the College. The participants discussed what defines cheating but stopped short of arriving at a consensus.

Professor Collins proposed that EFC launch a Professionalism, Ethics and Leadership in Engineering Education Initiative. This broader initiative would address the issues of professionalism and leadership in addition to ethics. It would also take a look at student engagement in the learning process since any mismatch in the expectations that faculty and students have of the level and nature of student engagement will create conditions that lead to unprofessional and/or unethical behavior and undermine our students’ potential as leaders. Recognizing that too many students make uniformed or poor decisions and engage in behaviors inconsistent with their own long-term goals, this initiative is intended to help our undergraduates reach their full potential both while they are students and after they enter the workplace. Collins stated that the goal is to change the very culture of our undergraduate programs with the aspiration that our programs and graduating students will become recognized as both distinctive and distinguished for their commitments to and accomplishments in professionalism, ethics and leadership. Collins argued that although this is a very ambitious goal, he could think of few actions that the faculty might take that have as great a potential to dramatically enhance the quality of our undergraduate programs. Collins expressed the expectation that we if we chose to proceed with the initiative, we
could pursue this effort with the full support of the Dean’s Office. He also anticipated that the initiative would be a multi-year effort with several distinct components to include among others a faculty task force and a student task force.

A substantial discussion ensued about this proposal. A variety of observations were made including that we do not operate in a vacuum, that the culture of the broader society has much to do with the culture in our undergraduate programs, that in general it is very hard to change a culture, and that is was uncertain that such an ambitious goal could be achieved.

The Council decided to proceed with the proposed Professionalism, Ethics and Leadership in Engineering Education Initiative with the understanding that a faculty task force would be appointed and that decision about the scope and additional elements, if any, of the initiative would await further discussions by the EFC. The EFC will discuss the membership of the Task Force at a next meeting.

4. The Council discussed the leadership of the three EFC Standing Committees. The EFC Chair, Professor Collins, will contact faculty members recommended by the Council to serve as Chairs of the Committees.

5. The EFC adjourned at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Witold F. Krajewski
EFC Secretary