



**Office of the Executive
Vice President and Provost**

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March 27, 2023

Harriet Nembhard
Dean, College of Engineering

Dear Harriet:

In accordance with University of Iowa policy, colleges are required to undergo a review at least every seven years and the Executive Vice President and Provost is responsible for organizing and directing the process and formulating conclusions.

The College of Engineering successfully completed a comprehensive accreditation by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in 2021. Due to this extensive review, the College of Engineering recently completed an abbreviated collegiate review. The Collegiate Review Committee focused on the following specific themes:

1. What are the strengths, opportunities and challenges associated with the college's undergraduate program? Does the college have a clear "value proposition" for prospective students? What are the market forces and competition factors in play related to student recruitment and enrollment pressures for the college?
2. What is the current status and future state of the college's graduate programs (size, strengths, challenges)? What are the college's plans regarding graduate student recruitment for the next five years? Does the college have targeted areas of growth for its graduate programs?
3. What is the current state of the college's research enterprise (areas of strength, focus areas, infrastructure needs, support services, etc.)? How might the college capitalize on its research strengths?
4. How are the college's resources managed (e.g., faculty salaries, hiring strategies, enrollment management, indirect cost recovery, etc.)? Are there plans to deploy resources in a coherent and transparent way?

The Collegiate Review Committee was informed by the college's self-study, ABET accreditation report, and collegiate strategic plan. Interviews were conducted with institutional leadership and the College of Engineering's dean, leadership team (including associate deans, DEOs, and senior administrative staff), staff and student governance councils, center directors and administrators, academic program staff, postdocs, and faculty. You received the review report on January 3, 2023 and were asked to review and respond with any factual errors. Your response on January 20, 2023 provided suggested clarifications and corrections. The review committee incorporated

several of the suggestions into the final report. Subsequently, the college was asked to submit general comments regarding the review report, which were received on February 8, 2023.

The Review Committee identified many strengths within the college that were addressed in the report. They are summarized below.

- Talented students, faculty, and staff that are highly engaged across campus.
- Faculty and staff who are committed to the success of the college.
- A robust and collaborative research enterprise with nationally and internationally renowned centers and institutes. The highly recognized research enterprise also attracts graduate students and provides research opportunities for undergraduate students.
- A strong connection to the health science colleges and UIHC that enhances educational and research programs.
- The recent addition of an attractive and functional Annex that provides new opportunities through modern classroom, research, and study spaces.

The review team also identified several opportunities for the college moving forward. They are summarized below.

- A transparent communications plan is needed across all levels of the college to keep students, faculty, and staff better informed regarding policy changes, decision-making processes, budget, etc.
- Increased alumni and corporate engagement efforts would enrich student recruitment, teaching, mentoring, and internship experiences.
- Infrastructure to support educational and research activities is lean, creating opportunities to review current needs and realigning resources with collegiate priorities. Potential infrastructure needs identified by the review committee include administrative and grants management support, strategic communications, alumni and corporate engagement, and updated marketing strategies. Any staff restructuring to better align with these needs should be transparent.

After reviewing the College of Engineering's self-study, the Collegiate Review Committee Report and the collegiate response, I have several observations and recommendations.

Undergraduate Program: The college has an actively engaged undergraduate student cohort and strong peer support and student mentoring programs. The undergraduate program is of high-quality and provides an opportunity for the college to increase undergraduate student enrollment. Increased enrollment will generate additional tuition revenues which will in turn provide critical support to the college in carrying out its missions. Working more directly with the Office of Admissions, the college must develop and implement a value proposition/recruitment strategy that will resonate with future undergraduate students. Additionally, increased alumni and corporate engagement efforts would further enrich student recruitment, education, mentoring, and internship experiences.

Graduate Program: The college has a strong research enterprise that attracts graduate students and provides graduate assistant funding opportunities. However, the college should develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term graduate program enrollment plan that includes considerations around graduate student support mechanisms.

Research Enterprise: The college has a successful research enterprise and is highly collaborative across campus, particularly with the health science colleges. The college would benefit from a review of its current infrastructure with an eye towards increased support of research efforts, particularly for those faculty not affiliated with a center or institute, and to determine the best deployment of resources. The college should also develop strategies to position itself to be highly competitive for new major grant funding opportunities, including interdisciplinary center grants.

Collegiate Resources: Development, communication, and implementation of a comprehensive and well-articulated plan for collegiate central resource use of redistributed indirect cost recovery is a priority. The college is encouraged to continue to realign resources with collegiate priorities and increase the return on investment. The college should continue to be innovative in its educational offerings to increase student interest as well as develop strategies for fundraising to support undergraduate and graduate students and provide start-up packages for new faculty hires.

Additionally, the college should develop a communications plan to disseminate information to faculty, staff, and students that spans across all levels – departments, centers and institutes, central units, and collegiate leadership. This will help with transparency and consistency of information being communicated regarding decision-making activities, policy changes, budget considerations, facility issues, etc.

In conclusion, the College of Engineering has talented faculty, staff, and students who are highly respected across campus and committed to the success of the college. While the college faces some challenges, there are also substantial opportunities. I ask that you work with the collegiate leadership team, in consultation with your faculty and staff, to develop and implement plans to address the recommendations above and incorporate them into the collegiate strategic plan. I am confident the college will utilize its strengths to address these recommendations. I look forward to hearing updates during our regular meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kregel', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kevin C. Kregel, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost

cc: Barbara Wilson, President
Lois Geist, Associate Provost for Faculty