

**FACULTY OF ENGINEERING
DEAN'S STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Friday, January 22, 2010
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
E2 3324

Present: Shabnam Ivkovic (Chair) Engineering Undergraduate Office
Adel Sedra, Dean of Engineering
Andy Barber, Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering
Charlie Boyle, Engineering Machine Shop
Kristen Deckert, Systems Design Engineering
Breann Doom, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Bert Habicher, Chemical Engineering
Mike Hurst, Engineering Computing
Julie MacMillan, Management Sciences
Andrea Piños, Dean of Engineering Office
Tracie Wilkinson, Centre for Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology

Regrets: Carol Kendrick, School of Architecture
Linda Kenyon, Dean of Engineering Office
Bonnie Neglia, Civil and Environmental Engineering

MEETING NOTES

I. Welcome/opening remarks from the Chair

- S. Ivkovic, Chair, welcomed new members to the Dean's Staff Advisory Committee. She reminded members that the committee is not a task force, but rather it is a committee that provides the Dean with advice on staff issues.

II. Report from the Dean

- i. The Dean welcomed S. Ivkovic as the Chair to the Dean's Staff Advisory Committee.
- ii. Undergraduate Application Numbers (OSS and Non-OSS)
 - The Dean reported that the number of applications received from highschool students for undergraduate admission is down for the Faculty and the University overall. He is confident however that the Faculty will be able to meet its undergraduate targets with equally good students. The Dean is working closely with the appropriate teams to investigate why the Faculty's application numbers declined this year; did we do something differently, or did our competition do something better? The Faculty will work hard to persuade those students who are offered admission, to accept those offers and register at UW.

III. Graduate Application Numbers

- Application numbers for admission to graduate programs in engineering are very good. The Dean noted that the provincial government still has money available for graduate students through the Reaching Higher Program. The Faculty will aggressively compete to secure at least a portion of these funds.

IV. PDEng Renewal Task Force

- The PDEng Renewal Task Force is working hard to renew the PDEng program. The program will undergo significant improvements to address the concerns raised by the students and external reviewers.

V. Provincial Government Funding

- At this time the provincial government has not made any decisions about tuition fees, grants, etc., (the main sources of university revenue), therefore the system remains in a state of uncertainty. The Dean suspects that the universities will probably not see a big cut or a big increase.

VI. Hiring Freeze

- The Faculty continues to hire for mission critical positions; a case must be made for each.

VII. Accreditation visit for nanotechnology program

- The Faculty is about to graduate its first class of nanotechnology students. The program is going through the accreditation process and is currently being reviewed by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board; the Dean reported that the recent accreditation visit went well. CEAB will communicate its decision in mid-June.

VIII. Staff Relations Committee

- The Dean reminded the committee that he is now a member of the university's Staff Relations Committee.

IX. DSAC Membership to Engineering Faculty Council and the EFC Nominating Committee

- Carol Kendrick has stepped down as the DSAC representative to both Engineering Faculty Council and to the EFC Nominating Committee; as a result, a DSAC member(s) must be nominated by DSAC to serve on these committees

DECISION: Andy Barber will represent DSAC on Engineering Faculty Council, and Kristen Deckert will serve on the EFC Nominations Committee.

X. Best communication practices

- The committee reviewed the best practices (see below) that were derived from the discussion at the December DSAC meeting, as well as the summaries that were provided to L. Kenyon following that meeting.

Best Practice 1: The Department Head should encourage regularly scheduled team meetings to improve communication between staff members. Department Heads should also encourage the participation of all members of the department in regularly scheduled department meetings to strengthen communication between staff and faculty, and administrative and technical staff. Communication between various groups within a department is just as important as communication within the groups.

Best Practice 2: Each Department should have an informal gathering place, such as a coffee room, to encourage communication between all members of a department.

- The Dean commented that ensuring that a coffee room is available to staff is directly tied to the availability of space in the department. He noted that as new buildings are erected, there will be more space for such use.

ACTION: A. Sedra will encourage all Department Heads in the Faculty of Engineering to implement Best Practice 1 in their units at the February meeting of Chairs and Associate Deans.

ACTION: DSAC reps will follow up on the best communication practices with Department Heads and discuss changes that could be made.

ACTION: DSAC will revisit and follow up on best communication practices at the June DSAC meeting.

XI. Vision 2010 Plan

- The Dean provided the committee with the history of Vision 2010 explaining that the planning process began back in 2004. The Faculty was looking to improve what it does, to set goals, and to make those goals measurable. It was important to ensure that the plan was closely tied to resources. Published in 2006, Vision 2010 became a blueprint for the Faculty, not simply a statement of aspirations. There was engagement with stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, as well as with external reviewers who were brought in to review each department and answer the question 'how do we compare to the rest of the world'. Every year in the spring, a progress report is published reviewing the year's accomplishments, as well as identifying what was not accomplished and why. Vision 2010 will be brought to a close this spring, when a final report will be published. The remainder of the calendar year will be used to develop the next five-year plan.
- The Dean reviewed the staff-related accomplishments of Vision 2010:
 - DSAC was created.
 - Staff are now represented on Engineering Faculty Council and the EFC Nominations Committee.
 - A number of Townhall meetings have been held to update and engage staff members on the Faculty's activities. (Note: The Townhall meetings were well-attended by staff, thus, the Dean is in support of holding more.)
 - DSAC established and implemented the staff recognition awards.
- During the initial planning process for Vision 2010 a task force on staff issues was struck. The task force report that was created offered a number of recommendations, including the establishment of DSAC. DSAC members then reviewed those recommendations and considered not to carry out a number of them.

ACTION: A. Piños will provide a copy of the task force report to committee members.

ACTION: DSAC will revisit that task force report on staff issues and review the recommendations that were made.

- The Dean briefly reviewed the Vision 2010 Plan and the 2008 Progress Report (distributed with the agenda). In looking at the Four-year comparison of Faculty:Staff ratios, one committee member pointed out that grant-supported staff are not accounted for in the staff data. The Dean noted that in the next plan it may be worthwhile to include those staff numbers in a separate column.

ACTION: Committee members are asked to read the VISION 2010 Plan and the 2008 Progress Report.

- The Dean explained to the committee that he is looking to DSAC for advice on putting in place a process to create the staff section of the next plan. He recommended that members meet with staff in their respective units to discuss what can be done to improve working conditions and environment. The Engineering Planning Committee will provide DSAC members with precise questions that they can pose to staff in those meetings.

XII. Other business

i. Staff recognition in the Faculty

- Some concern was raised by committee members that the Faculty is not doing enough to celebrate the awards and accolades received by staff. For example, even though the Staff Recognition Awards program has been implemented and is running successfully, the prestige of the awards is not widely known or publicized. Eng-e-News is an effective internal communication tool that would be an appropriate medium to celebrate such announcements.

ACTION: DSAC members will review the last two or three issues of eng-e-news to see if staff are being profiled/represented.

ACTION: To help motivate staff to read Eng-e-News, DSAC members will post the latest issue, and all future issues on the department bulletin board.

ii. Grade 9 Shadow Day

- One committee member identified that Grade 9 Shadow Day may be an outreach opportunity for the Faculty. The suggestion was to organize the day more broadly to increase its impact on grade 9 students.

ACTION: A. Sedra will forward the Grade 9 Shadow Day suggestion to Mary Wells, Associate Dean for Outreach.

iii. DSAC Meetings

ACTION: A. Piños will post meeting times and dates on the DSAC website.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m. The next meeting is February 18, 2010 at 1:30pm.