Engineering Family Orientation

Betsy East
Assistant Dean, Student Services
Agenda

• Curriculum
• Coping with Changes
• Student Support
• Role of Parents/Family
• Questions/Discussion
Goals of First-Year

- Become part of Cornell community
- Establish math / science foundation
- Learn about engineering
- Explore different majors
- Learn how to ask for help
- Become a sophomore
## Engineering Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Physics or Chemistry</td>
<td>Major Program</td>
<td>Core Courses + Electives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intro to Eng</td>
<td>Intro to CS</td>
<td>Engr. Distribution</td>
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<td>Writing Seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engr 1050</td>
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<td>Liberal Studies Distribution</td>
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</tbody>
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AP/GCE/IB Credit

- AP/GCE/IB credit means added flexibility
- May choose to accept or not accept credit
  - Work with faculty advisor
    - Confidence level in material
    - Take Cornell department placement exam
      - Math, Chemistry, Computer Science
      - Physics – if no AP score
“Affiliation” with Major

• Middle to end of sophomore year
• Preparation and planning now
• Exploration encouraged
  – Intro to Engineering courses
  – Engineering 1050
  • Required to go to two major information sessions
  – “Got Major” presentation
• Student uncertainty about major
  – common, expected
What Do Faculty Expect?

• Students will come to class
• Work done on time
• Pace OK unless hear otherwise
• Will hear from students who have questions or problems
  – Students will take initiative
• Code of Academic Integrity will be followed
What Can Students Expect?

- Workload may feel reasonable at first
- Increased load over time
- Mental stretch
- First Prelims end of September
Wake up call
(sometimes)

Reality of the pace
sets in
Early Intervention

• Safety net
• Faculty in core courses send grades to Advising Office
• Staff contact students with C or below in core courses
• Offer assistance and provide resources
What Can Parents/Family Expect?

Initially
- Love most of my classes
- Homework is easy
- Less work than I thought

As time goes by
- This is really hard
- I don’t know if I made the right choice
- Don’t like my roommate
Coping With Many Changes

• Environment
  – Urban to rural
  – Small to large school

• Homesickness
  – Want a home cooked meal
  – Miss you and/or siblings

• Social Setting
  – More (or less) diverse community

• Residence Hall Life
  – Sharing space
Demands on Students

- Self
- Peers
- Dorm Life
- Social Setting
- Environment
- Career Choice
- Homework
- Tests
- Labs
- Grades
- Faculty

Cornell Engineering
Keys to Success

• Ask for help

“If you learn anything at Cornell, please learn to ask for help. It is a sign of wisdom and strength.”
David Skorton, Recent Cornell President

• Keep up with work

• Seek out resources
Student Services

• Many professionals, but not one mind reader!
  – Advising
  – Learning Initiatives
  – Diversity Programs
  – Co-op and Career Services
  – Asst Dean, Student Services
  – Assoc Dean, UG Programs
Cornell = Opportunity

- Undergraduate Research
- Student Project Teams
- Community Service
- Leadership Opportunities
- Student Organizations
- Athletics/Clubs/Intramurals
- Social Life

Can create challenges in decision making
Time Management

• Prioritize
  – Academic
  – Extra-curricular
  – Socializing

• Act on priorities
  – Calendar book
  – Daily schedule
  – Classes, study time and location
  – Exams
The Role of Parents/Family

- Role in transition
  - Influence, not control
    - Can’t regulate their lives
    - Listen, raise questions, put them in touch with resources

- Mentoring
  - Help student explore alternatives
  - Student takes responsibility for finding solutions
  - Make mistakes and learn from them
The Role of Parents/Family

• Be Supportive
  – Actively listen, ask open ended questions
  – Trust in your student’s decision making
  – Student is CEO of own college experience
  – “Oh Zone”
    • Oh, that sounds like a difficult situation; how will you handle that?
    – Help guide to resources
    – Send care packages
Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

• Students have right to:
  – Inspect records
  – Challenge incorrect information
  – Keep records private
    • Professor’s names, course schedules, grades

• Treated as legal adults
  – Responsibilities and privileges
  – Personal Decisions
    • Coursework, classes, social life, personal well-being
FERPA (continued)

- Parents/Legal Guardians **may be notified**
  - Best interests of student
    - Withdrawals
    - Good standing is at issue
    - Disciplinary probation
    - Behavior inappropriate to continued enrollment

- If health or well-being of student is at risk, and known to us, you will be notified
Additional Resources

• University Family Guide
• Engineering Info for Families
  – www.engineering.cornell.edu/familyguide
• Engineering Undergraduate Handbook
  – www.engineering.cornell.edu/handbook
• Don’t Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money by Christine Shelhas-Miller, Helen Johnson
Summary

• Incredible opportunities here
• Big adjustment for student
• Curriculum challenging/stimulating
• Tons of resources and support
• Students should get involved
• Your most important role is to be supportive!