MEC Meeting Minutes  
November 8, 2000 8:00am – 9:00am  
240 Carpenter Hall

Attendees: Jim Bartsch, John Belina, Michel Louge, Mike Isaacson, Mike Hayes, Karen Biesecker, Bruce Kusse, Mark Eisner, Joe Shultz, Ulrich Wiesner, Pete Loucks, Larry Cathles, Albert George, Graeme Bailey and Dawn Warren

Absent: Claude Cohen, Tim Healey, Bing Cady

Meeting called to order at 8:06am.

The minutes of the September 13, 2000 MEC meeting were reviewed by the committee members and were unanimously approved.

Two Semester Early Admit Discussion:

Joe Shultz reminded the MEC members of the discussion held at the September 13th MEC meeting regarding a petition submitted by CEE. During the September 13th meeting, the MEC members discussed the petition of Jamie Reed and this raised the question of undergraduate students earning graduate credits prior to their one Early Admit semester and counting those credits toward their M.Eng. degree. The September 13th discussion raised a larger question of how fields currently handle these situations and what precedent the MEC might create if they allowed counting of graduate credits toward the M.Eng. degree prior to the one Early Admit semester. Joe provided an example of a transcript for a student currently enrolled in their Early Admit semester. Joe noted that the courses shown on this transcript are not labeled “graduate credit” or “undergraduate credit.” Instead, individual fields determine which credits are counted toward the undergraduate degree and which credits are used toward the M.Eng. degree. Concern was voiced by several MEC members that the spirit of the M.Eng. degree has never been to achieve two degrees in a 4-year period.

The MEC felt this decision should be left with the individual fields and, Graeme Bailey proposed the following addition to the MEC Rules:

“If a Cornell student is wishing to apply what would else-wise be regarded as transfer credit of courses 500 level or above, those will routinely be considered favorably by the field as long as those courses have not been counted previously toward their undergraduate degree.”

(The statement will be incorporated into the revision of the MEC rules by the Bylaws Subcommittee and brought back to the MEC for their vote.)

Bruce Kusse asked what action would be taken when an Early Admit student does not complete their undergraduate degree for whatever reason – “will the student be allowed to enroll in a ‘second’ Early Admit semester?” The answer, the MEC concluded, based on the existing Bylaws, is that students are intended to have only one semester as early admit status. Michel Louge stated that students need to be held accountable if they fail an undergraduate course during their Early Admit semester. The MEC agreed, however, that the field should have the option to extend a second Early Admit semester for particular situations.

Future Discussion Issues:

- By allowing “Graduate” credits to be brought forward from semester(s) prior to the ‘Early Admit Semester’ of the M.Eng. program, we would be making it easier for students to complete their undergraduate and M.Eng. programs in 4 years.

- Pulling graduate level credits, prior to the student’s official Early Admit semester, to be used toward the M.Eng. degree could potentially discredit the value of the M.Eng. program. Mike Hayes voiced concern over the loss of revenue that could result from this procedure.

Civil and Environmental Engineering Petition:

Pete Loucks, from Civil and Environmental Engineering, presented the petition for Jamie Reed who is essentially petitioning to do two semesters as an Early Admit M.Eng. student. (This petition was received by the MEC on September 13, 2000 and was deferred until the November 8, 2000 MEC meeting.) She is currently in her 5th year as
an undergraduate student and is a varsity athlete. She is petitioning to bring M.Eng. credits forward from the Fall 2000 semester, and the Spring 2001 semester would constitute her Early Admit semester. The Fall 2001 semester would be her full-tuition graduate semester.

Al George voiced concern that the approval of this petition would set a precedent that the MEC does not necessarily want to set. It was pointed out, however, that the MEC Rules do not explicitly limit M.Eng. students to one Early Admit semester. (See Paragraph 1 of these minutes.)

Jim Bartsch noted that Jamie’s petition had been submitted to the MEC early enough to allow her to adjust her Fall-00 schedule if the committee rejected the petition. Or held her to the ‘9-credit rule’, and that it would be inappropriate to hold the student to the 9 credit transfer limit rule at this time. Based on the response to Professor Kusse’s earlier question, and the student’s situation, the MEC decided it is appropriate for the field to make the decision. A motion was approved unanimously to refer the issue back the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

New Business:
Graeme Bailey distributed the Ad Hoc Committee Draft. It was stressed that the document is a draft and is not for wide circulation. Graeme requested that feedback be e-mailed to gob1@cornell.edu.

Early Admission Petition and Course Record Form:
The wording at the bottom of the Early Admit Form currently reads:

“I certify that the above named student will have between one and eight credits remaining to satisfy requirements for a undergraduate degree as specified above.”

Graeme made a motion that the wording be changed to read:

“I certify that the above named student will have between one and eight credits remaining to be applied toward an undergraduate degree as specified above.”

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07am