Master of Engineering Committee Meeting
February 13, 2002
240 Carpenter Hall  8:00 – 9:00am

Attendees: Jim Bartsch, Graeme Bailey, John Belina, Larry Cathles, Claude Cohen, Mark Eisner, David Grubb, Mike Hayes, Associate Dean Isaacson, Bruce Kusse, Michel Louge, Larry Newman, Joe Shultz, Dawn Warren

Guests: Dean Sunny Power, Patty Apgar (sitting in for Fred Kulhawy), Karen Biesecker

Absent: Jim Jenkins, Bing Cady

Jim Bartsch called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

December 2001 MEC Minutes
Jim asked the MEC to review the December 2001 minutes. Jim requested a revision in the CEE petition section regarding the need for a petition based on Jacqueline Bloomingdale’s GPA. A request was also made to increase the font size to 12 point. Both requests were noted. Jim reminded the MEC that past minutes are on the web (www.engr.cornell.edu/grad/staff) for everyone’s convenience. The December meeting minutes were approved with changes.

Ad Hoc Summary of Priorities
Joe Shultz provided the MEC members with an updated copy of the Ad Hoc Summary of Priorities. He asked everyone to review the document and submit any additional revisions to him by Friday, February 15th. The Ad Hoc report will be submitted to Dean Craighead after the 15th.

Petitions:
Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering:
Michel Louge presented the petition for Srihari Namperumal. Srihari graduated with his B.S. in May 2001. He is asking to have 2 of the 3 credits from his S’01 MAE 417 course transferred to his M.Eng. program after the 3-week transfer period because he has decided to audit the 3-credit TAM 678 course rather than take it for credit. The 417 course wasn’t needed for his undergraduate graduation. Srihari needed more than 8 credits to graduate in his final undergraduate semester, making him ineligible to be considered as an Early Admit student. Much discussion followed regarding the transfer of excess credits, and it was recommended that the Rules Committee convene to review and clarify section III.C.4a&b. The MEC members agreed that they were having a problem with the transfer of credits that appeared on the student’s undergraduate transcript (even though the credits weren’t needed for graduation). A motion was made to allow Srihari to transfer 2 credits from his undergraduate transcript, which were not used to meet degree requirements into the M.Eng. program, in exception to the 3-week rule. All in favor (4), all opposed (1), abstained (5). The petition passed.
**Electrical & Computer Engineering:**
John Belina presented a petition for Andrew Pierson, an ECE graduate in May 2001 with a 2.42 GPA. He fell below the 2.7 GPA rule, but ECE offered him a trial semester to take courses. He took two 4-credit classes during his trial semester in addition to an ECE S/U class. He received a B in 445 and in Imaging he received an A+. ECE is petitioning for Andrew to be allowed into the M.Eng. program. ECE is recommending that Andrew be Provisionally Admitted; that he take 12 or more credits (receiving a B or better); and that he plan to be here for 2 additional semesters. A motion was made to allow these 9 credits to be brought forward to allow the student to be provisionally admitted into the ECE M.Eng. program for the Spring 2002 semester. All in favor (7), abstaining (2). The motion passed.

A second ECE petition was submitted for Bogdan Zinchenko. Bogdan received his ECE undergraduate degree in January 2002 (finishing his coursework over the 2001 summer) with a 2.5177 GPA. ECE granted Bogdan a F’01 trial semester, and he took two 4-credit courses (in 445 he received a C+ and in 537 he received an A-). A motion was made to provisionally Admit Bogdan for S’02 with the understanding that Bogdan will take 12 or more credits (receiving a B or better). The vote was passed unanimously.

**Sunny Power, Dean of the Grad School**
Dean Power opened the discussion by stating that the Provost and the academic Deans agreed that prior TA training become mandatory for all international students with TA positions for the next academic year (a list of countries having automatic exemption is currently being drawn up). The training has been consolidated into a two week time period and the fundamental goal of the program is to get the student’s language skills up to speed. The students go through a screening interview at the end of the training program, and the participation of the DGS or faculty member helps to keep the interview content pertinent. Last year, the Provost paid for the program, but next year the departments will share the cost (primarily to assist with the student’s stipend). Dean Power understands that there are a number of issues specific to the M.Eng. TA’s who are half-time appointments.

The MEC voiced the following concerns to Dean Power:
- Lack of representation from department faculty
- Challenges with having one standard for all programs
- Timing issues as a result of M.Eng. admission and TA decision made in the Fall
- Timing issues resulting from many fields waiting after the start of the semester to appoint TAs
- Program not set up for large numbers of students arriving in the Spring
- Lack of evidence supporting the need and the benefit of this program
- That the College has a TA training program and that many departments have training requirements
➢ That departments exercise their own means of screening and assessing communication skills
➢ That this is a result of a greater issue (of what is National Problem) where measuring instruments are not in place to assess communication skills. TOEFL measures written not spoken English. The situation may be an opportunity for Cornell to be a leader and provide a national service by addressing this issue.

Dean Power concluded the conversation stating that she would like to see if there is a way to come up with a solution that meets the M.Eng. program’s unique situation while still meeting the spirit of the policy. She requested the number of international M.Eng. TAs and a copy of the TA training curriculum used in the College’s TA Training Program. Joe Shultz agreed to provide that information.

New Business
Jim reminded the MEC that the Rules Committee needs to convene within the next couple of weeks to clarify the transfer of excess credits section in the by-laws. Mark Eisner asked if drafts of the two interpretations could be prepared by Joe Shultz for comparison.

Mark Eisner indicated that he would like to include an agenda item on the deferral of international student graduation dates. The CCGB undergraduate policy regarding this topic leaves the decision up to the field.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36am