A Proposal for a Part-Time Masters of Engineering Enrollment Option

1. Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to gain approval to enroll on-campus Master of Engineering students on a part-time basis.

2. Background and Motivation

There are approximately 73,000 Bachelor’s degrees in engineering awarded in the U.S. annually, and about one-half as many Master’s degrees. However, the Master’s degree is increasingly viewed as the requirement for effective professional practice in engineering. In recent years, this position has been espoused very directly by several of the major engineering professional societies. For example, the American Society of Civil Engineers has adopted Policy Statement 465, which states, in part, “The ASCE supports the concept of the Master’s degree or equivalent as the first professional degree for the practice of civil engineering at the professional level.” The National Academy of Engineering Committee on the Engineer of 2020, Phase II also views the baccalaureate degree as a “pre-engineering” degree. They challenge the engineering profession to recognize and reward the distinction between entry level engineers and engineers who have “mastered an engineering discipline through further formal education.” They state specifically, “Adequate depth in a specialized area of engineering cannot be achieved in the baccalaureate degree.” As more and more engineers pursue Master’s level education, the demand for Master’s programs is increasing and will rise dramatically in the coming years. Many of those prospective Master’s degree students are engineers who already have professional jobs, and who want to pursue a professional Master’s program without leaving their employment. For these mature students, part-time study is a necessity.

The Industrial Partners Program (IPP) was created to serve this need for part-time study. The IPP has several positive aspects but it does not provide the degree of flexibility required by many potential students. In particular, it is important to base tuition and fees on a per-credit hour basis, rather than on a semester basis as the IPP does. It is also important to permit students to take as few as three credits in some semesters in order to balance their academic and work responsibilities.

3. Target Population

The part-time enrollment option is designed to meet the needs of young working professionals who satisfy the admission criteria for the MEng but who cannot afford to interrupt their careers for full-time, on-campus graduate study. Typically, these are mature students who have at least one year of work experience when they begin their graduate work. The College of Engineering has many years of experience in working with such students through our relationship with Lockheed Martin – Owego.

4. Admission and Enrollment Criteria

The basic admission criteria for part-time and full-time on-campus MEng degree students shall be the same. All successful applicants will have, as a minimum, a
baccalaureate degree in engineering, mathematics, or science, conferred by an accredited college or university.

Individual fields within the College of Engineering reserve the right to restrict enrollments in the part-time enrollment option for academic or administrative reasons. They may impose additional eligibility requirements for part-time study consistent with the objectives of their MEng degree programs.

Students eligible to enroll part-time shall be admitted into the degree program using the same process as full-time MEng applicants and may opt to enroll in either the part-time or the full-time program. With sufficient advance notice, matriculated part-time degree students may also transfer into full-time on-campus study at the beginning of any semester of their study.

5. Tuition and Fees

Part-time students shall enroll and be registered in the Graduate School as fully matriculated students in the MEng degree program.

Students in the part-time enrollment option shall pay tuition and fees pro-rated on a per-credit hour basis and shall be enrolled for a minimum of three credit hours per semester. The part-time student is expected to complete the degree requirements within five years. In special circumstances, the student may request a leave of absence. The degree requirements must be satisfied within seven years.

Students in the part-time enrollment option shall be charged tuition and fees at a College of Engineering Special Program rate.

Part-time students shall be exempt from the requirement of purchasing health insurance subject to their providing documentation of health care coverage from another source.

6. Replacement of the Industrial Partners Program

The proposed enrollment option shall replace the Industrial Partners Program.