As of Monday, November 8, I met with 74 students MENG students:

- 2 of the individuals graduated in May or August of 2010
- 10 students made at least 2 or 3 return visits
- 12 of the students are domestic, remaining international
- 2 of the students met with me via videoconference from the NYC office

Engineering Departments Represented:

Biomedical 5
Chemical 5
Civil and Environmental 2
Computer Science 11
Engineering physics 1
Engineering Management 3
Electrical 3
Financial Engineering 31
Material Science 2
Mechanical 6
Operations Research 3
Systems 2

Summary and recommendations:

Most of the students come to see me for resume or cover letter review. I always ask them to describe their job search strategy, which usually leads into discussions about how to build a network of contacts. This is a challenge for the international students as they don’t have many U.S. contacts and are often reluctant to initiate communication with individuals they haven’t met. I spent time in the sessions showing them how to use available databases to search for companies and contacts.

Since the majority of Asian Financial Engineering students believe they want to enter the field of trading, and most of them are not truly fluent, nor have any background in financial services, they face a daunting challenge. They often express how they do not really understand what they are reading in the Wall Street Journal. I highly recommend asking a financial expert to introduce them to the Journal early in their Cornell experience, explaining which investment data is critical to know. It would also be very helpful to invite recent alumni of the program who work in risk management and quantitative analysis to discuss their roles in order to help the students learn about options beyond trading.

I encourage inviting MENG alumni to join the career mentorship program through Cornell Career Services. I drafted an invitation letter to use as a starting point. If you could attract several hundred of the graduates to enroll, the students would greatly benefit from connecting with them. They could learn more about different types of jobs these alumni hold and how they obtained their positions.

I have to add that it is truly a pleasure to work with the MENG students. They are so bright and very appreciative of any help that is provided to them as they ready themselves for the job market.