CCGB Meeting Agenda, March 4, 2005

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Undergraduate Announcements
3. Math 190/191 Winter Session Question
4. CS 280 Substitution
5. Committee on Minors

CCGB Minutes, January 28, 2005

Members: J. Bartsch, A. Center, D. Grubb, B. Isacks, B. Kusse, W. Philpot, L. Trotter, A. Zehnder
Ex-Officio: B. East, D. Maloney Hahn, R. Robbins, L. Schneider, F. Shumway, M. Spencer
Other: S. Coldren, C. Pakkala

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the November 19, 2004 CCGB Meeting were approved with minor changes.

Undergraduate Announcements: B. East announced that DiOnetta Jones has accepted the position of Director of the Engineering Diversity Program and will be arriving at Cornell in February.

D. Grubb announced that the CCGB Bylaws had been approved in December by the College of Engineering faculty.

Math 190/191: D. Maloney Hahn stated that the Math Liaison Committee had come to CCGB last year with a proposal to change the Math curriculum, which included removing the topics from the first math course at Cornell (Math 190/191). The material to be removed is roughly equivalent to Calculus 1 at other schools. CCGB had concerns that some students weren’t as prepared in calculus as others when they entered Cornell and that there was a need to accommodate these students. CCGB’s subcommittee on Math and Science came back with a proposal to accommodate the less prepared students which included pre-sectioning students in Math 190 instead of Math 191 for those with less math background, giving a Math placement exam during orientation, and allowing students to move from Math 191 to Math 190 based on a prelim given in the third week of the semester.

Also, a grading scheme for Math 190/191 was proposed that would give students who did all the work but did not do well enough to pass Math 190/191 a “NGR” (no grade) with the opportunity to take a tutorial over the break and take another exam before classes began in the spring semester. If successful, they could move to Math 192. About 15 students were invited to move to Math 190 based on the results of the first prelim. After the second prelim, another 12 students were invited to move into Math 190.

At the end of the semester, the Arts College, as well as the Dean of Faculty and University Registrar, expressed concern over our procedure. This use of NGR was inappropriate, and changing grades based on work done in January was against regulations. We were allowed to do it this year because we had already told students about it, but we agreed to change our procedures for future years.

We are now proposing that students receive the traditional grades they earn at the end of the Fall semester with a chance to petition to drop the course with a “W” after they successfully pass Math 190/191 either by a departmental exam in January or by taking the course. The motion we propose is in the handout given out at this meeting.

B. Kusse asked if Math 190/191 were offered in the fall. D. Maloney Hahn replied that Math 190 is offered in the fall only, but the other math courses are offered every semester. B. Kusse wondered why the students couldn’t take Math 191 the second semester if they failed Math 190. B. East stated that the CCGB is discussing this issue because they agreed to help students who are less prepared in math. D. Maloney Hahn added that when students have to take the course twice, it throws them off track with the curriculum.

A. Zehnder stated that some TAM faculty are teaching Math 190/191 along with math department faculty and have lots of opinions on this subject. They want the instructors (particularly Bing Cady) to have time to discuss the issue and come up with alternatives because they have to implement it. Another issue is that in engineering a “D” is essentially an “F”, and he wondered if engineering defined a failing grade differently than the rest of the
university. He said that he was cognizant that giving a NGR violates practices, but giving out a “W” after the end of the semester seems against the rules also. The rules need to be applied uniformly across the university.

D. Maloney Hahn said that the Math Liaison committee was in on the proposed changes; however, everyone needs to get on board. Math is the only course in the curriculum where a C- or above is required.

A. Center wondered if the poor grades in math were perceived as a lack of preparation or a lack of maturity or lack of something else. He wondered if the CCGB is trying to solve the perceived problem. B. East said that the College didn’t require calculus for admissions in the past, but with curricular changes in the College (and because most entering students seemed to have calculus), we began requiring it for admissions. Then we (the College) changed the Math curriculum so that it assumed students had some experience with calculus. We don’t know the exact content of the calculus courses being taught in the high schools, so we can’t always judge the students’ background accurately. R. Robbins added that the Advising staff will track these students who pass the exam in January through Math 192.

B. Kusse stated that if a student gets a D or F in Math 190, 3 days in January shouldn’t make up for that. They should have to repeat the course. Math is so fundamental. It is better to err on the side of caution and hold a student back. B. East said that students in Math 191 who didn’t do well on the first prelim should perhaps not be given the choice, but required to move into Math 190. A. Center suggested that if a student does not receive a good grade on the first prelim in Math 191, they should automatically be placed into Math 190.

The matter is referred to the Math-Science Committee to have conversations with the math department about this.

Summer Course Credit: D. Grubb stated that most people who take the “Explorations in Engineering Seminar” don’t continue at Cornell. B. East said that other seminars at Cornell similar to this one (such as Explorations in Life Sciences) offer credit, and more students might take it if credit were offered. The Continuing Education people brought up the credit issue in an effort to increase attendance. J. Bartsch said that he worked with Dick Lance to have some hands-on lab experience for the seminar participants. He suggested that smaller sections would give participants more choices, which might help entice students to take the course. Breadth would be key, and a grade would help a lot. A. Center wondered if the seminar would help students consider going into engineering. M. Spencer replied that a significant number of students who became interested in Cornell had a positive experience here by taking a course through Continuing Education and Summer Session. J. Bartsch wondered if making it a credit might have an unintended outcome. He wondered if faculty on a 9-month appointment would have to do extra work and not get paid for it. There would be more work for a faculty member if they had to set up labs and help run the equipment. They might view this as an intrusion.

B. Kusse motioned for the seminar to receive 1 credit. J. Bartsch seconded the motion. Vote: 7 approved, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining.

Liberal Studies List: L. Trotter stated that he agreed to look over the list with K. Pingali. D. Grubb said that the result is a large PDF file. B. Kusse mentioned that he was amazed and appalled by the extensive list of courses. D. Maloney Hahn said that engineering adopted the A&S listings, but we also allow for courses outside A&S. Thus, some cleanup is still required. D. Grubb said that usability and accessibility are issues. B. Kusse suggested that there be only 6 or 12 categories listed and that engineering work with that list. D. Maloney Hahn said that once the list of courses/categories is finalized, Advising should monitor it and update it every year. We need to keep track of the courses for graduation checks. B. East suggested that we add our listings to those of the Arts College and have Mike Hammer work with this.

Biology Courses for Engineers: D. Grubb said that the CCGB had previously spoken about revising biology courses for engineers. D. Maloney Hahn said that Biology 101 & 102 can be used as distribution courses, and Biology 110 and ENGR 101 can be used as an introductory course.

Engineering Distribution Courses: D. Grubb mentioned that these courses were discussed last semester, but the discussions were scrapped in favor of ABET.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.