### CCGB Meeting Agenda, October 24, 2008

1. Approval of minutes
2. Undergraduate announcements
3. Further discussion of motions on number of credits required for math courses (Gries)
4. Further discussion of the possibility of changing the criterion for Dean’s list (Gries, Bell)

### CCGB Minutes, October 17, 2008


**Ex-Officio:** K. Dimiduk, B. East, L. Schneider, F. Shumway, M. Spencer

**Other:** M. Graham, B. Howland, M. Hutson, C. Pakkala, N. Peterson, M. Thompson

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the 9/26/08 CCGB Meeting were approved as written.

**Undergraduate Announcements:** D. Gries said that he and S. Baker went to the Chemistry Department to discuss CHEM 209 because students were upset about the way the class is being taught. K. Dimiduk attended a lecture and got some more information on the course. Some information: Unlike CHEM 207, CHEM 209 doesn’t have a 1-hour recitation. Instead of the recitation, an hour was added to the lecture to keep the credits the same. K. Dimiduk said that CHEM 207 is taught earlier in the day, so it has a 1-hour recitation and a 3-hour lab. D. Gries said that David Zax has been teaching poorly, and the mean on prelim 1 was 40. Many students have been talking about dropping the class.

Gries and Baker spoke with Paul Chirik and David Collum about the class. They agreed that the course is being taught poorly. CHEM 209 has 3 lectures and several labs. D. Collum will talk to the instructor and see what can be done. Gries suggested to Collum that, if D. Zax is willing, K. Dimiduk would be happy to work with him to try and change the course. They have indeed gotten together. K. Dimiduk said that D. Zax acknowledged that he knew there were problems, but he didn’t know how to solve them. K. Dimiduk is working with him in various ways, and this is expected to help.

Gries emailed the freshman advisors about the problem. He told them to tell advisees that the course is having problems but to hand in there because: (1) is expected to be curved to a B, so a grade near 40 on the prelim is not a problem and (2) we are working with Chemistry to try to turn it around. Students shouldn’t worry about their grade on the first prelim.

A. Center asked what happens if students don’t drop the course and don’t do well in it. The ChemE students need a good chemistry basis for their major. D. Gries replied that he hopes that the course will be improved soon. The next time it is offered, a different person will teach it.

A. Ruina said that there is a problem with low prelim scores in Math 191 too. D. Gries said that he is looking into the problem. A. Ruina argued that the mean on the exam is basically null data. A Math 191 teacher gave a hard exam 10 years ago, but since then he has consistently won teaching awards. Nothing has changed in the course, but students complained about the difficulty of the exam. TAM is supposedly overseeing math courses; a low mean in Math 191 makes students upset. We’re aware of that, we’re working with Alex Vladimirsky, and the only problem for that course appears to be the low exam scores.

D. Gries stated that he needs course assessments for all Engineering core courses. He will send the instructor a letter and information about this. We have the Environmental Engineering onsite visit coming up and need books for ABET. If no copy is available, people need to let us know.

F. Shumway said that we are currently in the middle of early intervention and are contacting students about this. Advisors will be copied on all messages concerning their advisees. Next Wednesday, Advising will offer a seminar regarding affiliation with Diversity from 5-6 p.m., and it will likely be held in Phillips Hall. Advising will offer more information on this soon.
First-Year Parents Weekend will be October 25–26.

October 27 from 4-5:30 will be the Engineering Majors Fair. We hope to have all majors represented at the fair. B. East said that we do the majors fair for freshmen and sophomores so they can pick their majors. We talk to prospective students about the accessibility of faculty, so it would be ideal to have some at the fair. This is a good opportunity for faculty members to sell their majors.

L. Schneider said that Engineering Learning Initiatives is accepting applications for faculty research grants. This is a great way for faculty members to get $3,000 to support new undergraduate researchers.

Preliminary Discussion of the Admission of Non-affiliated Transfer Students: E. Fisher said that the current practice is that students need to be accepted into a major. D. Gries said that the motion is that students entering as juniors and seniors need to be affiliated with a major, but that students entering as sophomores can be admitted either with or without being affiliated with a major. Students haven’t typically taken courses they need to affiliate, so that is the reason for the motion to admit external transfers to Engineering with an unaffiliated status.

M. Spencer distributed transfer data regarding application numbers, the numbers of students admitted and numbers of students denied admittance. A copy of the informational brochure that is given to transfer students was also distributed. The Preparing for Transfer brochure includes courses students need to have. The majority of entering transfers are sophomores.

A. Center asked about the nature of the problem that we’re trying to solve. D. Gries replied that majors are being asked to admit transfers when students haven’t had the courses they need in order to transfer in. L. Pollack said that she has been asked to help transfers students who are less prepared than Cornell students that she cannot affiliate. She doesn’t feel that it is fair to affiliate transfer students when she can’t admit the Cornell students to the major. B. East said that there is pressure from the university to accept transfer students.

F. Shumway said that we currently do not permit internal transfer students to enter the College until they have successfully completed the necessary courses for affiliation with their intended major. We publish specific academic requirements that potential external transfer students need to successfully complete prior to applying as transfer candidates. Admissions staff currently reviews and screen out inappropriate transfer candidates so they don’t get referred to departments. It is important to admit transfers directly into a major and make a commitment to helping them succeed. Departments that are popular with undergrads will likely be popular with transfers. Some departments already feel overtaxed with large numbers of students, so they are unwilling to admit additional students. She feels that it would be best to have potential transfer students take courses at their current institutions to satisfy affiliation criteria at Cornell, develop transfer articulation agreements with other schools, or possibly offer students the option of taking engineering courses at Cornell extramurally. Consistency is a primary concern. We would need a safety net for students who transfer in and do poorly, which is typically the Independent Major. B. East said that if we bring transfer students in unaffiliated and they have a bumpy semester, this would make the Advising staff members their advisors. They would become unaffiliated sophomores. If they are already in departments, departments have a buy-in to help them get through their bumpy semesters. F. Shumway said that students can have bumpy semesters, get their acts together, and then graduate with the help of a department.

E. Fisher said that she doesn’t like the idea of admitting unaffiliated students. If a major doesn’t believe in a student, admitting them isn’t good idea.

L. Pollack said that the issue is that if a student comes in as 2-1, it has to do with whether they have taken the appropriate courses, not whether majors like or believe in them. They need to be prepared for affiliation the way a Cornell sophomore is prepared.

M. Thompson said that fairness for the students is critical. A transfer is expecting to come into a particular field. Students rejected by a department will come in as unaffiliated hoping to become affiliated. This is a recipe for disaster. A. Center said that he is not in favor of admitting unaffiliated transfer students.

L. Pollack said that she doesn’t want pressure to admit transfers because she is adamant about not accepting unqualified students. It is a huge time investment to go through folders to evaluate applications.
B. East said that the expectation is not to admit ten transfer students, but the expectation is that all departments participate in the transfer admit process. Departments may admit students conditionally. L. Pollack said that she understands, but she will be very selective. She stated that transfers have a very tough road and that almost half of their transfer students have unfinished degrees or leaves of absence.

A. Ruina asked if people are treating 2-1 students the same as other transfers. M. Thompson replied that if a student has only finished one year, they need to take courses for conditional affiliations. There is a different process for transfers. E. Fisher said that there is always some compromise for transfer students.

R. Bland stated that he doesn’t want to get pressure to admit unprepared transfers. Time commitment is a big issue, but setting up students for failure is worse. Day Hall will push on the college and extended pressure to the fields, but we need to resist pressure and only admit students who show a good chance of success.

B. East said that this year we had 43 students entering as transfers. The University wants 50-60 transfers due to budget implications. We can work harder to get 3-1 students or students who have completed the appropriate requirements.

M. Louge suggested that, because transfer students typically require greater advising and other resources, financial incentives to departments with already large enrollments is an important prerequisite before admitting more. He stated that the relatively large population of transfer students to Human Ecology is facilitated by the assignment of their NYS tuition directly to the College. In contrast, Engineering has no incentive in place to encourage departments to admit transfers. In fact, the success of programs in attracting students has hardly been met by the proportional assignment of more teaching resources across the whole spectrum of expenses. Thus, an unfunded mandate by the University to have popular programs admit more transfer students may further strain resources already made thinner by the success of such programs.

B. East stated that we are not asking people to lower their standards. Admissions can screen more applications. With fewer applications given to departments, departments will accept fewer students. Some departments want transfers. M. Thompson said that MSE has a higher acceptance rate of transfers because students want that program.

D. Gries requested a straw vote for those in favor of the status quo: All CCGB members were willing to keep the transfer process the way it currently exists, under the condition that departments would not be pressured into accepting transfer students.

L. Pollack said that the transfer policy is difficult for students. A transfer advisor would be a great idea. The students need more support.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.