1. Approval of minutes
2. Undergraduate announcements
3. ChemE Proposal for a substitute to Math 294 (Mike Duncan)
4. Report on ABET review of ENGRI courses (Bryan Isacks)
5. Proposed revision of Advisor Approved Electives description in handbook (Alan Zehnder and Bryan Isacks)
6. Report from majors on whether each major has a GPA requirement for graduation

CCGB Minutes, October 19, 2007

Ex-Officio: B. East
Other: C. Pakkala, N. Peterson

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the 9/28/07 CCGB Meeting were approved as written.

Undergraduate Announcements: None.

Reporting of Department/School Practices for Academic Actions; Discussion of Guidelines for Notifying Parents: B. East stated that she is gathering information about how departments handle academic actions to make sure that the appropriate processes are in place. The information about department practices will aid in developing a protocol for notifying parents of serious academic actions.

B. East shared what the Advising Office does regarding academic actions. Advising looks at the students’ grade slips and divides them into piles for those students needing major or minor actions. There are criteria for what type of action each student will get. A copy of the suggested action is sent to the faculty advisor, and a copy is filed in the Registrar’s Office as well as put in the notes section of SIS. If serious issues exist, they are brought to the ASPAC Committee. Advising brings cases to ASPAC each semester, they distribute copies of students’ transcripts to the committee, and the group goes through each student record. They then make decisions on what to do. They are not always easy decisions, and a student is notified of the committee’s decision by phone, email and letter. The students are given an opportunity to appeal. They submit their appeal in writing, within 5 days of receipt of their letter. The appeals are given to ASPAC, they go through them, and then decide whether or not to grant them. They figure out the best route for a student, and then students are notified by email and phone.

Advising has developed a plan for notifying parents. For a major academic action, students will be told of the action and told that we will notify their parents within a week, thus allowing the students time to tell their parents.

R. Bland asked if data were available on which students fall in each category. He said that it would be interesting to see if students do well if their appeals are successful. B. East replied that she has data and will compile it with the help of R. Robbins and J. Bartsch.

E. Fisher stated that MAE examines the students’ transcripts and sets aside those not satisfying the criteria for good standing (GPA or failing courses). Their academic committee meets in early January or June to go over cases, and they decide on a warning, stern warning, leave or withdrawal for the students. They email and send letters out to their students. The students appeal in person a week later. MAE sometimes has an appeals meeting at the start of the fall semester, for summer actions. The first offense usually results in a warning, then a stern warning, a leave, then a withdrawal.
B. East stated that departments need to have these meetings early enough in January to let students register elsewhere if they don’t return to Cornell.

L. Pollack said that AEP does not have a formal process in place. At the end of the semester, grade slips are sent to advisors, they look them over, and then a student is called in. If a severe problem exists, a formal letter is written. A letter is done by the DUS if a student is required to withdraw. The advisors are usually good about reviewing the grade slips.

S. Baker stated that MSE does not have staff support for reviewing the students’ records; advisors do this. They look at transcripts in January and June and make decisions based on any issues. Withdrawing students is not an option unless severe problems are found in the January meeting. They are clear about consequences with their students; students usually get a 2nd chance, but never a third chance. The students receive the requirements for good standing, along with instructions of what they need to do, in a letter from him. All of the advisors get together to review the students’ transcripts. If students get a warning but then there is no improvement, they get a suspension or expulsion. The process works pretty well and they catch everyone in June. They sometimes have time to review the student records in January.

B. East stated that a problem we have is that we’ve been too nice to kids too many times, and we end up in a situation where we feel it is too late to kick them out but they really shouldn’t graduate either. S. Baker said that usually by the time a student is withdrawn (2-3 of them per year), the students are apologetic rather than upset. Any attempts to contact the parents ahead of time would be fantastic. Usually parents have no idea what is happening here.

R. Bland said that in ORIE the process is that the Undergraduate Coordinator reviews the grade slips, identifies problems, and that in the past the Director of Undergraduate Studies has reviewed the information and decided on actions. ORIE recently created a committee to handle this. There are various categories of warnings, leaves, etc. that come progressively. This means that sometimes students are not withdrawn until they are upperclassmen. One student had 5 different actions with conditions, but talked his way out of stern actions. This is a delicate issue, and some students benefit from warnings, but others don’t. One student failed to meet conditions for 3 years and the parent had no idea how his son was doing.

B. Isacks said that EAS has a major in 3 colleges. In A&S the Assoc. Deans take a larger part in keeping track of students and sending out letters. They haven’t had many cases of academic problems because students in engineering tend to do all right. He has handled cases with help from the staff in Advising. They have had maybe 2 cases in the last 5-6 years. There is no formal procedure; they simply have faculty talk to students who are doing poorly.

M. Duncan said that the Associate Director reviews the grade slips each semester and makes a list of students who don’t meet the criteria for good academic standing. Previous actions and proposed actions are also listed. Meetings are held in January and in the spring. They decide on actions and send out letters. In most cases when appeals are accepted, it is bad for the student.

L. Lee said that there are not a lot of problems with academic warnings in CS; students tend to go to a leave pretty fast. They handle most notifications by email.
J. Bartsch said that BEE has students in 2 colleges and they have a large program. About one-half of the students are in the joint AG/ENG program. The AG Committee looks at appeals, and staff may have no engineering background, which can be a challenge. The committee looks at all grade slips, and for those students who are “frequent fliers” (those with multiple problems), he calls Rich Robbins for advice. They put students on trial terms occasionally, with conditions (usually required biweekly meetings). It is easier to put students on a leave if conditions are not met.

R. Bland said that there is a tendency to be lenient toward students because they often claim of extenuating circumstances. Students have a variety of excuses as to why they are not doing well academically. D. Gries said that biweekly meetings seem to help the students. He saw CS students when they were on probation, and the meetings helped.

W. Philpot said that CEE has a spreadsheet with academic information for each student, N. Porter (the Undergraduate Coordinator) looks at the grades each semester and flags the students in trouble, and then a committee reviews the recommendations and sends out warning letters. They sometimes also have students sign agreements for a probational stay.

S. Baker stated that it is his experience that students who have academic deficiencies, petition to stay, and their petitions are granted, generally do not do well. Putting a student on leave is viewed as overwhelming punishment, but it is good for that student and other students in the class. To have 1-2 people doing poorly has a dampering effect on other students in a class.

M. Duncan said that if you give students a letter with conditions, they interpret it as punishment. ChemE tells them it is the best way for them to improve.

S. Baker said that as a policy MSE doesn’t issue 2 warnings for the same set of problems. If a student gets a letter to be put on leave and they appeal, he sends them a response on when the appeal will be heard. He tells them that if the leave is lifted and they don’t do well, they will be withdrawn. He says it is in their best interest to take a leave. About half of the students who get this information take the leave. The process works well.

E. Fisher said that this issue will be revisited in a couple of weeks.

Report on ABET review: Physics/Math Committee: L. Pollack stated that she, B. Isacks and R. Bland met to discuss the CS100 course assessments. Some items in the individual assessments need to be addressed. CS100R, a matlab-based robotics course, needs some tweaking in general. There were some critiques about inappropriate laboratory hardware. This was the first time the course was taught and instructors had lots of comments about improvements that are needed. The second largest issue was in addressing how CS101 would impact courses, i.e. what was added to the curriculum to replace JAVA in CS100M. There were small criticisms and suggestions, and she will give those to D. Gries. One assessment didn’t have enough detail and will need to go back to the instructor for more work. D. Gries said that he will contact instructors based on the report.

Report on ABET review: Engineering Courses Committee: D. Gries, R. Bland and W. Philpot produced a report on the course assessments. They were primarily good, but some need to be tweaked a bit. There is a recommendation that in ENGRD 202 Math 293 should be made a co-requisite. This issue should be discussed by the CCGB. S. Baker said that ENGRD’s are not supposed to have pre-requisites outside of the core curriculum, but they could use Math 293 as a co-requisite. D. Gries said that perhaps
the appeal to make ENGRD 211 4 credits should be revisited. L. Lee said that some people in CS don’t believe that there should be 4 credits worth of work in the course. D. Gries said that CS can decide if they want to bring the issue back to the CCGB. Some assessments were not good at all. The CCGB will contact instructors to try and get the problems fixed. We will contact people from which we haven’t received assessments—both the instructors and the chairs.

**GPA Requirement for Graduation:** D. Gries stated that currently there is no college GPA requirement for graduation. Some majors have them. B. Isacks said that once a student affiliates, they are subject to departmental rules, not college rules. D. Gries said that each department should check to see if it has a requirement.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.