CCGB Minutes  
October 2, 1998


Members absent:  J. Hopcroft

Ex-Officio:  T. Cookingham, K. Hover, D. Maloney Hahn, F. Shumway


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Approval of Minutes: The minutes of September 25, 1998 were approved as read.

Undergraduate Programs Announcements: D. Maloney Hahn, Advising, announced that Tracey Thompson, from Professional Programs in Student Services, has accepted the position of Engineering Registrar. He will begin on October 12, 1998.

ABET Update: J. Stedinger, L. Albright, and T. De Boer, discussed ways to best prepare for the evaluator visits occurring in the beginning of November.

   Discussion: J. Stedinger, CEE, indicated that in his two separate experiences with ABET reviews the evaluators had different agendas. The first evaluator, from academia, wanted much more information and materials regarding the courses and their content. The second evaluator, from industry, was looking more at the overall program.

   Schedule: L. Albright, ABEN, just returned from an ABET evaluation at Auburn where he was an evaluator. Typically most of the evaluators will arrive on Saturday. Review of the course materials and labs will take place on Sunday with a 5pm meeting of the team to review the programs together. Lou suggested that each department contact the reviewers, if not already done so, to see if any additional material is needed and to find out with whom the evaluators would like to meet. Some of the evaluators may ask to meet with students in a particular course (usually upperclassmen) or a student organization. In addition, the evaluators may want to meet with faculty either as a group or on an individual basis. It will depend upon the size of the department and on the evaluator.

   Lou suggested that all departments should be contacting the reviewers to work out the schedule. To date the departments of Civil, Mechanical, ABEN, and A&EP have spoken with their evaluators. Lou suggested that departments not already contacted by their reviewers should make the initial contact.

   Communication: K. Hover, Assoc. Dean, it was our understanding that the communication would come through the Dean’s office until after the evaluators were approved. Some of the evaluators have chosen to contact the Dean’s office for more information or to ask questions.
L. Albright, ABEN, stressed that the more communication between the evaluators and the departments the better.

*Laboratory Issues:* L. Albright, ABEN, laboratory safety is a concern of ABET, although it is not mandated by them. If deficiencies are found it could be cited as a concern in the final ABET report. The evaluators are looking at lab equipment, space, support, safety and maintenance. In addition, they want to see if the lab is a suitable environment for teaching students Lou suggested that ABET wants to see a “laboratory plan,” which should have been contained in Volume II, showing continuous improvements and updates of equipment and space.

Lou suggested that it is not necessary to have lab instructors available for the lab tours, although it might be useful to have them present to explain lab activities and to respond to safety issues. K. Hover commented that our team chief, Phil Borrowman, emphasized lab safety when Ken met Phil last summer. (A letter describing this meeting was sent to the departments in July.)

The college lab safety committee has been touring the labs to check compliance of health and safety policies.

Hover suggested that what one observer might call a problem with overcrowding in a lab, another might call a safety problem.

*Design:* Another important aspect of the accreditation process is the “design component.” If the course has a design notation (in course descriptions, Volume II) the evaluators will want to know how that design is integrated into the course. Lou suggested that some sort of document should alert the students to design requirements and opportunities. It will be important that the faculty know the ABET definition of design and are prepared to discuss their courses in a manner that is consistent with the Volume II course descriptions and statements about design content. Further, it is important that all faculty are made aware of what ABET visit is all about and how important the visit is to the department.

T. De Boer, MAE: traditionally the design component is a weak area in the college. The differences between engineering and science become apparent in an ABET review at Cornell, in which the reviewers are chiefly interested in engineering. L. Albright, ABEN, indicated that other colleges do not seem to have this problem with design.

J. Stedinger, CEE, gave an example on how design can be integrated into homework problems. It depends upon the wording of the problem.

*PE License:* Depending upon the team there may be some emphasis placed on the number of faculty with Professional Engineering registration (PE). The evaluators may want to know how many students are planning on taking the part one exam (FE).

*Accreditation Results:* Possible ABET accreditation results are: Accreditation for six years; an interim three-year report review; an interim three-year visit, or “show cause.” A “show cause” result means there have been deficiencies found within the program, and that the program needs to “show cause” for continuing accreditation.
Hover was told last summer that if a program is judged to require an interim visit or is rated “show cause,” the criteria will still be under the old ABET criteria.

In the exit interview the review team submits a statement to the institution. This statement is written and reviewed by each team member. From that statement a draft report is submitted to the college. Copies of the draft report will be sent to each department. Any deficiencies from the draft report can be responded to but no new issues can be raised. This report is likely to arrive on campus in January or February, 1999.

Once the review team has left, the college has fourteen (14) days to respond to the outbriefing comments to correct “errors in fact.” Once the draft report is submitted to the college (Jan. or Feb.) we have 30 days to correct deficiencies that can easily be changed. The review team has a summer meeting in which a final report is compiled and submitted to the college. Final results will be communicated to the college in late Summer or Fall, 1999.

**Critical Areas:** Recap of the critical areas:
- ABET definition of design
- Lab safety
- Faculty know what the review is about
- Students who meet with evaluators know what the review is about

**Miscellaneous:** A copy of a shell of the 1998-99 Evaluator Program Report was given to the Undergraduate Programs Office to be copied and sent to each department. This will give us insight into what the evaluators look for in a review process. (This was copied and sent to departments on October 2.)

It would be useful to see if there are faculty in each department who are former or current reviewers. They would be able to give advice on what they look for in reviews at other universities.

There have been significant changes in the ABET criteria (particularly in the required design content) since that last review. The information is available in the ABET handouts and on the ABET web site.

Review of the materials is important, since most of the assoc. directors have changed since the materials were compiled.

J. Stedinger, CEE, it might be beneficial for departments to look at what would be the easiest way through the system for the student to take, then determine if the student would meet the graduation standards by choosing this route.

J. Stedinger, CEE, the ABET visits have created positive results on the departmental program. After the last review a one-page summary of the outcomes was sent to the faculty in CEE.

L. Albright, ABEN, many of the specific program criteria, such as design content, originate with the professional societies for each field.

Lou suggested that it is important for faculty to demonstrate continued professional development. It may be useful to be prepared to discuss faculty consulting. This could show a connection to industry.
Lou reminded us that the ABET review is one way to convey information to the reviewers and on to the administration about issues that departments feel are important.

**Continued Discussion of Course Evaluations:** K. Hover, Assoc. Dean, submitted version two of the draft charge to CCGB on the subject of course evaluations (attached). In addition, an excerpt from the final report of the 1994 Task Force for Improving the Academic and Advising Environments was distributed (attached). The excerpt contains relevant information regarding course evaluations. Copies of the full report were made available to those interested.

*Discussion:* L. Lion, CEE, thought that separating and distinguishing between improving instruction and faculty assessment is important. How is this embodied in the document?

K. Hover, Assoc. Dean, “Course Evaluations,” what does this mean? Evaluating teaching performance or improving the course or both?

L. Lion, CEE, to me course evaluations means the faculty assessment information gets transmitted up the ladder whereas the improvements to the course go directly to the instructor; hence, two different end users.

F. Gouldin, MAE, course evaluation are course content vs teaching effectiveness. Departments want to know the student’s reaction to the course content whereas the Dean’s office wants to know how effective is the teaching. Assessment may be a better word to use rather than evaluation. We need to be explicit in the charge to the CCGB.

R. Kay, GS, ultimately the charge to the CCGB is coming from the Dean.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.

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**CCGB Agenda**
Friday, October 9, 1998
1. Approval of October 2, 1998 minutes
2. Undergraduate Program Announcements
3. Further consideration of course evaluations charge to CCGB
4. Liability and Risk Management