Agenda, October 29, 2004
CCGB Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Undergraduate Announcements
3. Report from ASPAC
4. Report from Student Experience Committee
5. Post-Course Assessments of Spring 2004
6. Motions of the CCGB

CCGB Minutes, October 22, 2004

Ex-Officio: D. Cox, B. East, R. Evans, D. Maloney Hahn, R. Robbins, M. Spencer
Other: C. Pakkala

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the 8 October 2004 CCGB Meeting were approved with a minor modification.

Undergraduate Announcements: B. East stated that the upcoming weekend would be First-year Family Weekend. D. Gries will be on a panel during the weekend on behalf of faculty, along with some student services staff and two students. She added that M. Spencer and the Admissions staff did a great job on the Hosting Weekend. She announced that the College was ready to launch their website. She sent an email to the engineering students with the website URL the previous night, asking them to test the server, and the official launch was scheduled that day (Friday, 10/22/04). She requested that people notify either her or M. Hammer if they see things that aren’t working. One student had already replied to her email, telling her that the website was awesome.

Results of Spring 2004 PCA Review: D. Gries stated that various subcommittees of the CCGB reviewed the post-course assessments (PCAs), and no problems were uncovered that require the CCGB to change course contents, etc. There were some problems regarding the PCAs themselves, so he and D. Grubb drafted some letters to the instructors, asking them to make some improvements in later post-course. These letters were sent to the CCGB representatives for suggestions. Because some faculty might be upset about the letters, Gries suggested that the letters be given to the CCGB representatives, who would give them to the faculty members and explain the situation. Everyone in the departments who is involved in the curriculum should know about the necessary improvements, including the chair.

L. Trotter wondered if the assessments would be ongoing. D. Gries replied that they would be ongoing and needs to be done regularly, but not necessarily every semester. If it is merely done every other year, he feels that people will forget the process. The process should not be a lot of work for the instructor. D. Cox said that improvement of a course is the ultimate objective, and the PCA is the vehicle that gets us there. D. Gries added that the PCAs are examined by the CCGB to see if changes are required in the overall curriculum. A. Center stated that we say “we’re trying to do continuous improvement of the course, and the syllabus might be totally irrelevant to what is done in the course, but the course might be taught well according to the post course assessment.” He questioned whether the syllabus wasn’t the more important document to review. D. Gries replied that the syllabus is important, but the PCA was more of a focus because it hadn’t been done before. The PCA might lead to changes in the syllabets. It is important to assess how well the courses meet the outcomes given.
L. Trotter asked if he should retain student copies of work for every aspect of the course. D. Cox replied that he should have a few samples of work that document each course outcome. She suggested that the outcomes list for each department be kept short. Trotter agreed that to convince ABET that students took the course and did well is important, but he can’t imagine an instructor pouring over students’ work from prior semesters. D. Cox said that an ongoing process of assessment is prescribed in ABET guidelines.

D. Gries stated that he thinks the PCA is a useful tool for assessing success —better than looking just at students’ grades.

D. Gries agreed to review and edit the letters to the faculty. The letters will be given to the CCGB members who in turn can give them to the instructors within their departments. J. Bartsch questioned what outcome was supposed to happen as a result of the letters. He said that he wouldn’t want to receive a letter like this, and he felt that a coaching type of letter would be better. B. East said that it should be suggested in the letters that this is information for the next review cycle. She thought the letters should be toned down a little because they were a bit harsh and would irritate people. D. Cox suggested that the letters avoid saying that the PCA was done poorly, but instead contain some suggestions on how future improvements could be done. She agreed to create and send an opening sentence to D. Gries.

Physics Courses and AP Credits: D. Maloney Hahn said that under Physics 112 AP credits, a 4 or 5 on the mechanics portion of C or 5 on B with AP math credit on the A or B exam has been acceptable for AP credit. Last year, the math curriculum was changed, and credit was not given for math AB. Last year, students could get credit for Physics 112 with AB credit, but now it is only given for BC. If all students come into Cornell with calculus, they should get credit for it. He looked back at data for Physics B and went through 60 transcripts from 2 years ago to discover that 63 students had Physics B, but a number of them had Physics C (a third), and about 13 took Physics 112, ENGRD 202 had 8 students, and all had A’s or B’s with one grade of C. D. Gries asked if it were possible to get a 5 on the physics exam without knowing calculus. D. Maloney Hahn replied that they could on the Physics B exam. B. East said that all entering students are required to have calculus, with a few exceptions, and those few students are required to take it during the summer.

M. Spencer suggested that it be put in writing that the students need calculus so they can see it prior to their senior year in high school. D. Grubb said that it seems logical to state that students need the extra math in order to enter Cornell University. He received complaints from people in Physics that the proposed change would establish a weakness in physics and would allow students to take physics without calculus in their junior year and calculus in their senior year. He said that he is in favor of the change. D. Maloney Hahn agreed to add language saying that calculus is required.

Motion: Motion from the Math & Science Committee: Whereas all freshmen entering the college of Engineering have had a calculus course, students with a score of 5 on the AP Physics B exam may receive credit for Physics 112 without having credit for Math 191. Vote: 6 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

Letter Grades for Minors: D. Grubb stated that he looked at minors within the college, and all require a specific letter grade in all their courses within the minor. The Engineering Handbook should state that. D. Maloney Hahn said that every minor has a C or better as a requisite in the course descriptions, which should be stated in the handbook for clarification purposes only. BMEP 501 is S/U only, but that is the only exception. A. Center suggested that, for engineering minors, it should be stated that where a letter
grade is offered, the course must be taken for a letter grade. A clarification will be put in the Engineering Handbook.

Minors Outside the College of Engineering: D. Gries stated that currently very few engineering students get outside minors and Duncan Bell notes the minors on their transcripts. He questioned whether the CCGB needs to approve the minors. This will likely become an issue more and more. He went through the courses of study in A&S and CALS and listed concentrations that will become minors. He also listed some departments that don’t offer minors. L. Trotter said that the CCGB should not have any say in it, as long as it is done within their programs of study. He sees students all the time who want 2 majors, and he helps them work this out. If the courses are good and there isn’t a duplication of material, he doesn’t see a problem. J. Bartsch said that there isn’t much substance to some minors, and he wouldn’t want it implied that they are offered through Engineering. He is having a tough time deciding on courses that can do double duty, particularly with the EAS courses, and he will likely have trouble with CIS courses also. B. East agreed to check to see if PeopleSoft transcripts will indicate whether a student graduated with a minor and what college the minor resides in. The consensus was that the CCGB should not become involved in approving outside minors.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 a.m.