Agenda, March 29, 2002
CCGB Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes of 3/15/02 Meeting
2. Undergraduate Announcements
3. Brief Reports by Chairs of Subcommittees (Student Experience, Liberal Studies, Math and Sciences, and Engineering Communications)
4. Broad Question: Appropriateness of the Traditional Math Curriculum
5. Broad Question: How Should CCGB Prepare for the New Dean?

CCGB Minutes
March 15, 2002

Ex-Officio:  K. Athreya, D. Cox, B. East, D. Maloney Hahn, T. Shapiro, T. Thompson
Other:  S. Klingle, C. Pakkala, J. Powell

Approval of Minutes:  The minutes of March 8, 2002, were approved with minor revisions.

Undergraduate Announcements:  None

Motion to Re-title the Engineering College Graduation Honors from the Current Latin System to a Sequential Scale of “Distinction”:  T. Jordan (Assoc. Dean) distributed a handout which detailed the qualifications for honors in each of the Colleges at Cornell. The motion was “to re-title the Engineering College graduation honors from the current Latin system to a sequential scale of distinction.” If successful, the motion would (without changing the GPA criteria) change the names as follows: “Cum laude” would change to “with distinction,” “Magna cum laude” would change to “with high distinction,” and “Summa cum laude” would change to “with highest distinction.” M. Duncan (ChemE) stated that the different names that Engineering has for honors are good because the nature of honors in Engineering is different than that in the other colleges. B. Kusse (A&EP) said that the way things stand now, 2 students can have 2 different honors names with the same GPA. D. Cox (Assist. Dean) questioned the underlying reason to change the uniformity of the honors designation and suggested that a university committee examine the proposed change. The motion failed by a vote of 0 in favor, 8 opposed, and 0 abstentions. F. Gouldin (M&AE) suggested that, were there wide agreement on uniform standards for honors and distinctions, the CCGB would look more kindly on the proposal.

Sally Klingle (ILR) Presentation:  S. Klingle presented slides on the report that the CEE originally commissioned to determine how and why students choose their department affiliation. The PEWS focus group recruited (via the Sundial and posters) 20 undergraduate volunteers; most of whom were not CEE students; men greatly outnumbered women. The students were asked for their perceptions of engineering as a field of study, their perceptions of Cornell, perceptions of engineering disciplines in general, and perceptions of engineering departments. F. Gouldin (M&AE) asked how representative groups of 3-4 students are and indicated that there would be more cross-fertilization with larger groups. S. Klingle responded that the 3-4 size group worked well because each student had more time to speak during each one-hour period. Each session was tape-recorded and notes were taken, and then the information was analyzed by the PEWS research group to look for common themes. The primary
factors for students in selecting the field of engineering were math and science ability and an interest in solving problems. Secondary factors were the job market and career possibilities. T. Jordan (Assoc. Dean) asked if freshmen and seniors exhibited a difference in thinking about careers. S. Klingle replied that freshmen actually initiated discussions of different career possibilities and indicated that mobility is more important than money. They cited teachers in their high schools and engineering experience gained in other places as sparking their interest in engineering careers. M. Duncan (ChemE) stated that a survey done in ChemE indicated that fewer than 10% of the students indicated that success in engineering was the most important factor for them entering the field. D. Cox (Assist. Dean) said that when selecting engineering students for admission to Cornell, the reviewing committee looks at personal criteria and leadership roles held in high school in addition to academics. S. Klingle stated that the primary reason students chose Cornell over other schools was primarily due to its national rank, but also to its liberal arts, diverse environment and beauty of the campus; faculty and research were not factors in the selection. Students frequently mentioned M&AE, ChemE and ECE as fields that they were interested in, and there was an evolution in understanding their future careers from the freshman to the senior level. D. Cox mentioned that the majority of engineers don’t go into technical positions when they graduate. About 50% of the graduates aren’t in traditional engineering positions and around 18% go into traditional/pure technical engineering jobs. There is an increasing number who go into consulting and business management. T. Healey (T&AM) asked if the students’ perceptions of easy and difficult departments is consistent. S. Klingle replied that the reputations for the departments is well known, with E&AP and ChemE near the top in difficulty and ORIE the simplest. The ORIE students appear to be more interested in making money, and they view the Cornell degree as a way for them to make it. The ability to solve problems and take the right amount of math is important to the students. They also feel it is important to have a connection between what they learn in the classroom and how they’d use that information later, in their careers. International students who came to the U.S. on scholarships didn’t always care about engineering and what department they were affiliated with. Some came to the U.S. on engineering scholarships but really wanted to major in music or another field. Some international students viewed CEE as an unsuitable major, because it led to an association with field labor. S. Klingle reported that freshmen in the study felt that the freshman experience was not successful due to the isolation of N. Campus, the physical distance from the main campus, and the lack of interaction between freshmen and upperclassmen. The freshmen view the upperclassmen as the best source of knowledge. F. Gouldin mentioned that the engineering students suffer the most because there is the greatest distance between their academic home and N. Campus.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.