

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING FACULTY ORGANIZATION (CEFO)

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 29, 2023, 11:30 AM

Lunch available at 11:30 AM

EPIC G287

The following individuals signed the attendance sheet:

Sid Alvis, Ahmed Arafa, Yamilka Baez-Rivera, Jaime Berez, Cathy Blat, Nan BouSaba, Nicole Braxtan, Valentina Cecchi, Don Chen, Youxing Chen, Harish Cherukuri, Jim Conrad, Michelle Demers, Gretchen Dietz, Abasifreke Ebong, Ahmed El-Ghannam, Kosta Falaggis, Wei Fan, Austin Fifield, Wei Gao, Janos Gergely, Gwendolyn Gill, Christopher Green, Courtney Green, John Hall, Meg Harkins, Mohamad-Ali Hasan, Tao Hong, Olya Keen, Timothy Kernicky, Rob Keynton, Milind Khire, Kevin Lawton, Churlzu Lim, Kevin Lindsay, Madhav Manjrekar, Edward Morse, Sherman Mumford, Mariya Munir, Asis Nasipuri, Dave Naylor, John Nettles, David Newell, Maciej Noras, Tobi Ogunro, Jaewon Oh, Belinda Parker, Stephanie Pilkington, Srinivas Pulugurtha, Jeff Raquet, Bienvenido Rodriguez-Medina, Fareena Saqib, Ali Sears, Sam Shue, Ron Smelser, Michael Smith, Kamia Smith, Stuart Smith, Lingguang Song, Tyler Stover, Arun Vishnu Suresh Babu, Brett Tempest, Farid Tranjan, Mesbah Uddin, Regina Vrikkis, Ke Wang, Dave Weggel, Qiuming Wei, Matthew Whelan, Wesley Williams, Artur Wolek, Jay Wu, Linda Xie, Terry Xu, Yong Zhang, HaiTao Zhang, Nigel Zheng.

Aidan Browne attended and presented but did not sign the attendance sheet.

(78 Attendees)

AGENDA:

1. Welcome from CEFO President Jim Conrad

Jim Conrad called the meeting to order at 11:39 AM and introduced the agenda. There were no objections to accepting this agenda, and the meeting moved forward.

2. Minutes from the last CEFO meeting (May 09, 2023)

CEFO Secretary Kosta Falaggis presented the minutes from the last CEFO meetings.

One member of the assembly had two objections:

- Firstly, the minutes were unavailable on the CEFO website and inaccessible to that faculty member.
- Secondly, we had a vote on the admission requirements but did not publish the admission requirements. It was, therefore, unclear to the faculty member what was voted on. The faculty member was under the impression that there were new admission requirements for the engineering major.

Jim Conrad responded that these minutes were available in your meeting invite. The College of Engineering CEFO site is under construction and being transferred from one system to another.

Unfortunately, the website was not available, and the minutes with the agenda were distributed via the calendar invite.

Jim Conrad also responded to the second concern that the admission requirements were not published, but the college would still maintain that admission.

Cathy Blat confirmed that the admission requirements are not going to be published on the website other than something along the lines of "We encourage competitive students."

Jim Conrad confirmed that this is consistent with the vote from the last meeting to adopt a competitive admission requirement.

A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was approved by a vote of the faculty present with a single vote in opposition to the motion.

3. Short remarks from CEFO President Jim Conrad

Jim Conrad gave some remarks regarding the CEFO constitution and the role of the faculty, where he emphasized that the curriculum is one of our rights to determine. We will meet this semester on a few Tuesdays between 11:30 AM and 12:45 PM in G 287.

4. Welcome from CoE Dean Robert Keynton

Dean Keynton gave a recap from the previous year:

- Successful year with a record \$17.8 million in research funding.
- College of Engineering recruitment committee worked closely with the faculty and staff at OSDs.
- Notable increase in first-time college students: 106 students from the previous year.

Moving forward, Dean Keynton mentioned that

- Continued effort is needed to achieve the desired student numbers.
- Appreciation was expressed for the work done during the summer.
- He has a positive outlook on first-year progress and an expected productive discussion.
- He plans to introduce a town hall meeting this fall.
- The Dean plans to attend at least one faculty meeting in each department in the spring. The aim is to address concerns and share visions for the current year.

5. Common First-Year Updates by Aidan Browne

Aidan Browne chairs the college-level common-first-year (CFY) curriculum committee. He presented the progress of the committee during the summer. He mentioned that he had sent an e-mail with a spreadsheet of the CFY curriculum and provided a QR code for the assembly to download the spreadsheet during the meeting.

In parallel, he mentioned there was progress on the department level to create a curriculum for the remaining years.

He presented the details of the CFY, the changes that were made since the last CEFO meeting, and what is needed for the Fall 24 implementation. He emphasized that a plan for a revised curriculum is needed for the Dean to request an exception for the total number of credit hours from the Provost.

Aidan Browne proposed a motion for the CFY. Jim Conrad asked whether anybody seconded that motion. An assembly member spoke up because he had a point to make. Jim Conrad said that the chair did not recognize the assembly member and invited him to leave because he spoke up while asking for a second. Several assembly members spoke up and mentioned that no second was needed because the CFY committee chair presented this motion, and hence, it was a committee motion. Jim Conrad clarified that this motion was not a committee motion and that Aidan Browne did not make this motion in his capacity as the chair of the CFY committee because there was no committee vote on the CFY curriculum.

Afterward, the motion was second, and the floor was opened for questions:

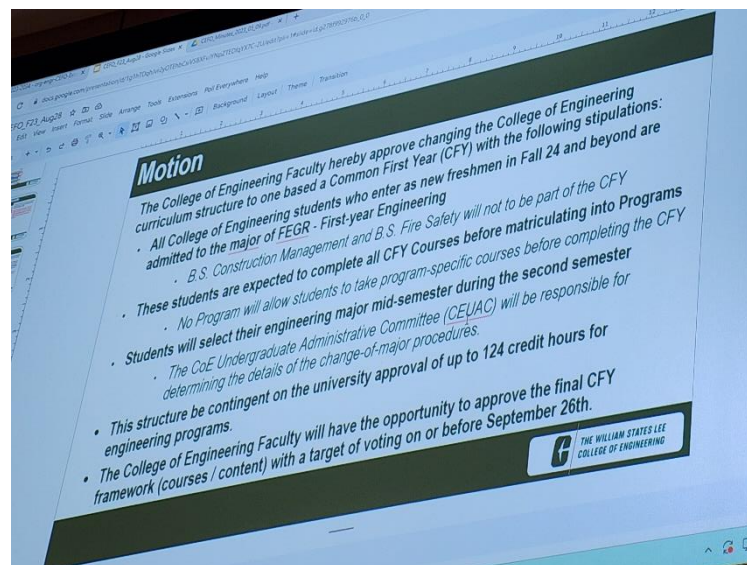
- One assembly member asked whether there would be different entry requirements for mechanical, civil, electrical, and engineering technology majors. Aidan replied that we changed the admission requirements, but ODS handles who gets admitted, and we do not have any more admission requirements. Another assembly speaker said this was the question raised at the beginning of the meeting, and the answers contradicted the previous answers because it was said that the admission requirement had only been removed from the catalog and not from the university. Jim Conrad said this point needs to be addressed at a different time and will not recognize the speaker to move on with the questions. Aidan mentioned that nothing that the CFY committee proposes changes the admission requirements.
- There was the procedural question: Let's say that this motion passes today, and we're committed to this path, and we cannot pass a final framework with all the details because as we work the problem, we see this just isn't going to work. Where does that leave us? Because we passed it. Jim Conrad replied that we can vote to rescind it at our next meeting if we can't make it all work. Aidan Browne mentioned that the split vote is needed to take advantage of time.
- A faculty member said he was on the CFY department-level committee, and many faculty members asked him the rationale for the CFY. Is it a conjecture by us, or is it based on data? Aidan Browne made many qualitative statements, but can he quantify his reasoning? This will help the faculty understand the severity and importance of bringing such a huge change to our program. The faculty member asked to obtain these answers in a written document so that other faculty members understand the driving forces behind the CFY. Dean Keynton responded that the original data showed that about 20% of students were staying in the college but going from one department or program to another. When he followed up with them, he discovered the data was incorrect. It's 5%, but the number of students we lost to other colleges was about 15%. After seeing this data, the Provost mentioned that a common first year is justified because we're losing still another 15%. Dean Keynton also mentioned that a lot of literature shows that having students do the calm first year does help them. However, because many of them don't understand the different engineering disciplines, they can't make the right choice. He also mentioned that the students cannot make an educated decision right now because unless they have a family member who is an engineer and differentiates what the different disciplines are, they struggle to know which one is suitable for them.

Motion to amend the motion of Aidan Browne

- A different faculty member mentioned that he was also a member of a department-level CFY committee. He asked for the original mission of the college-level CFY committee. Although this is not a committee motion, the original mission had four items that should be addressed. It was frustrating for the faculty member not to see the proposed solutions matching those goals. In essence, the CFY chair expects that the faculty members trust that this new curriculum will satisfy all of those multiple goals without evidence. The faculty member clarified that he favors a New Common Year and thinks it is a great opportunity. The main concern is that the problem with the proposed motion is that he is worried that our pie will shrink, and we should be planning to make the pie bigger to attract more students. Having a new approach to engineering education within our college could still be something we can advertise and recruit more students. The faculty member said, "The solution as proposed looks like a temporary solution, and everyone knows that nothing's more permanent than a temporary solution." He mentioned that the departments have studied the impact of this motion and identified that they could accommodate it, but the number of credit hours has to increase.
- As a result, the previous faculty member proposed a motion to amend the motion from Aidan Browne. The amendment to the motion is that the original motion of Aidan Browne is contingent upon having 124 hours of credit allocation for the departments to deliver their curriculum. During the discussion for this amendment, Dean Keynton mentioned that the 124 credit hours would be difficult to get past by the Provost, and a 123 credit hours plan would be easier to discuss with the Provost. A faculty member mentioned that there are ten new credits, and even if we work with 124 credit hours, we still must accommodate six additional credits. A different faculty member mentioned that the hands-on experience covered during the labs in mechanical engineering cannot be reduced without hurting the program.
- The motion to amend the motion of Aidan Browne has passed with no opposition to the motion.

Continuing with the amended motion of Aidan Browne:

The assembly continued discussing the amended motion. A photo taken on the day of the assembly is shown below:



- One faculty member sees a wider variety of opinions about the common first-year framework and feels that this indicates that the CFY is premature because they have such broad opinions.

He provides an example that ET students are more technology application-oriented and have different requirements in total math. The current framework is not inclusive and excludes potential students who would go to the ET department because 40% - 50% of the students choose ET directly because they do not need to take Calculus 1 and 2.

- A different faculty member asked whether prospective students had been informed of those changes. Aidan Browne responded that they are in the process of changing admissions now.
- The same faculty member also asked whether the CFY committee has addressed the many concerns of the MEES faculty members that were provided in writing. Aidan Browne responded that he reviewed the MEES department's comments, and the CFY committee accommodated some requests. Aidan Browne also said that many of the concerns had already been discussed since August within the committee, and we ended up with a compromise.
- One other faculty member expressed his concern that these new courses are not aligned with the courses transfer students usually take. Hence, they will be set back for those students, or they will feel so uncomfortable that they won't get here to begin with.
- The same faculty member also mentioned that the university has 30 hours as sophomore criteria. However, if we're only doing 29 credit hours, and they're not sophomores, a couple of courses require sophomore status.
- Another faculty member asked about students selecting their major during the second semester. Will they be given a pre-mechanical, pre-electrical, or will they be first year? Aidan Browne replied the concept proposed here is a common first year.
- One other member commented that students who do not do well in Calculus I or II can go into engineering technology. With the new plan, these students don't meet the requirements. So will these students have to leave the college? It's something to be discussed in the future.
- One faculty member liked the Dean's argument that our mission is to increase student retention. Hence, all upcoming CFY plans should consider the fact that we need to increase student retention. In particular for all departments - not just one department.
- One faculty member also mentioned we need to add flexibility for students.

Finally, a vote on the amended motion was made. The motion passes with some opposition.

6. Closing

The chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was moved and seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting ended at 12:49pm.