

Response to Issues Raised in Faculty Senate Meeting

Impact on Students

Both the college administration and the University Curriculum Committee have concluded that there will be no negative impact on students. There may in fact be new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations or courses.

Clarification of Administrative Structure

Currently in the College of Engineering departments are led by Dept. Chairs. These individuals are appointed by the dean and are sometimes recruited externally. These individuals are not in the bargaining unit. Under the school proposal, the two dept. chair positions will be replaced by the School Director. This Director will have the same responsibilities and authority as the dept. chairs held previously, and will not be in-unit. Currently, most dept. chairs appoint one or more Assoc. Chairs to assist in academic matters, such as course scheduling, advising and accreditation. These positions are almost always filled by appointing faculty from within the dept. Under the school proposal, these Assoc. Chair positions are called Dept. Heads, though the duties are identical to those of the Assoc. Chairs.

Budget Impact Statement

It was noted that no budget impact statement was filed. There will be no change in the budget of these units due to the formation of the school, therefore there is no impact to document.

Reasons for Negative Votes in the Departments

It is not possible to know what motivated 6 faculty out of 43 to vote against the proposal since the votes were conducted by secret ballot. The Chairs of the two depts. were asked to provide their insight as to the negative votes. Their comments are given below:

EES

During the discussions, some concerns about the proposal were expressed. Some faculty felt that it may lead to an ultimate merger and that we then would lose our identity and uniqueness as an environmental engineering department. Some felt that the "sustainability" idea was too trendy and not itself sustainable. This is more a name change issue, but again it came up in discussion on school formation. There were doubts that bigger was going to be more impressive, doubts that we would lose identity, doubts that the director would be biased, doubts that we would lose control of curriculum if the director had control of faculty assignments. Yet there was no strong objector, no one banging the table and leading a charge against the school. We were concerned so we identified potential problems and discussed them. We modified the MOU to relieve our

concerns. Stronger wording was added in places to reinforce the importance of the department and the discipline. Once we committed to the school we embraced the concept and want to move forward to realize all of the positive potential that the school offers. There is no faculty member in this dept. that I am aware of that is supporting the resistance to the formation of the school that has been voiced in the UF faculty senate.

CCE

Issues raised during initial discussion:

- 1) Concern that CCE would suffer economically under a combined budget.
- 2) Concern that we would be adding an extra layer of administration.
- 3) Concern over how the term 'school' will be interpreted to outsiders. Won't CCE lose visibility because 'civil' does not appear in the title of the school?

These concerns were addressed during the discussion by noting that no change in the budget of the school was planned and that the proposal actually removes one dept. chair position and does not in fact add an extra layer of administration. In regard to the last issue it was noted that the departmental identity is preserved by the school structure and can be marketed accordingly. By the end of the process most of the faculty in both departments were comfortable in moving forward with the school as evidenced by the vote.

Conflict with College Constitution

Barbara Wingo of the UF General Counsel's Office has thoroughly reviewed the College of Engineering Constitution and all relevant UF documents and has concluded that there is nothing to preclude the formation of the school either in the proposal or in the process used to approve the proposal. Though the college constitution does not specifically mention schools, the UF governing documents do and therefore formation of a school is allowed.

Issues Related to Process

It was suggested that the process used to approve the proposal and bring it forward to the Faculty Senate was flawed. It is important to note that the process followed by the college was the one that had been used in the past for formation of schools in other colleges. Namely, a vote of the faculty in the depts. was conducted, followed by approval by the UCC and GCC. It is important to note that even though a vote of the Faculty Council was not originally taken, the Council was informed of the process that was being followed and the proposal as the dept. faculty were discussing the issue. When the college first approached the Faculty Senate for approval, the issue of "affected faculty" was raised, with the implication that faculty outside the affected depts. should be allowed to register a tally. The Faculty Senate Chair advised that a vote of the College Faculty Council would be sufficient evidence of consultation with faculty in the college. Such a tally was taken with the outcome being 10 in favor and one against.