Minutes of the
Department of Materials Science and Engineering Faculty Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2013
IMS Room 147-A

Attendance: Faculty: Mark Aindow, Pamir Alpay, Hal Brody, Avinash Dongare, Rainer Hebert, Bryan Huey, Harris Marcus, Radenka Maric, Serge Nakhmanson, Rampi Ramprasad, George Rossetti, Prabhakar Singh; Staff: Cathy McCrackan, Lorri Lafontaine

I. Meeting called to order by Pamir Alpay at 10:35 a.m.

II. Minutes of the meeting of November 4, 2013 were approved as distributed.

III. MSE Numbers/UMC Data
The University Materials Council (UMC) recently held its annual meeting in Washington, DC, with only 18 participants because of the inclement weather. Pamir Alpay was not able to attend due to cancelled flights but had created a PowerPoint for the meeting of factual MSE data compiled with the help of Cathy McCrackan, Trista Albert and Heike Brueckner, that he shared with faculty.

For undergraduate recruitment purposes, the MSE office has been sending emails to freshmen and sophomore SoE majors promoting six strong areas: Award Winning Faculty, Excellent Selection of Classes, Financial Benefits, Industry Sponsored Senior Design and Jobs. Applications to MSE were 20 in 2012 and 29 in 2013. The ratio of undergraduate students to faculty is FTE 7.5, which is above average for UMC Top 10 institutions. Faculty have steadily increased; 16-17 is a good number compared to MSE departments in the country. Total graduate students (MS and PhD) is 78 with a good balance of females and males. Approximately 18-19 graduate degrees are awarded yearly. The ratio of graduate students to faculty is 4.8, which is the highest number in SoE. In terms of funds, the total funds per faculty are healthy. The data on publications for 2013 is not complete. The number of citations is on a healthy trend as well. This data will form the basis of discussion at the faculty retreat. Pamir Alpay asked faculty to register at Web of Science to record publications. Discussion followed regarding Google Scholar and Scopus.

IV. Department Updates: Pamir Alpay
A. Faculty Meetings and Retreat: Pamir Alpay announced the schedule of monthly faculty meetings for the spring semester (listed at the end of the minutes), along with a faculty retreat in May to discuss the department’s goals, objectives and strategic planning.

B. Search Update: Rainer Hebert reported there are currently 63 applications with over 100 applications projected. The search committee will meet in early January to review the first 40 applications. Applicants are highly qualified, many in the area of Nano-Bioelectronics. The position is posted in Higher Education, Academic Jobs and Diversity Database.

C. Labs: Pamir Alpay, Rainer Hebert and Dean Kazerounian toured the Mechanical Testing Lab. The space is suitable for 3-D printing capabilities and as a result, the space will not be lost.

D. Eric Jordan Appointment: Faculty unanimously voted for the joint appointment of Eric Jordan of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and MSE. The request will be forwarded to the Dean; Pamir Alpay, Robert Gao and Dean Kazerounian will meet with Eric Jordan to discuss the details.

E. Teaching Plans 2014-15, 2015-16: In efforts to plan ahead, Pamir Alpay, Rainer Hebert, Bryan Huey and Cathy McCrackan met to draft schedules of classes for 2014-15 and 2015-16 distributed to faculty. Please contact Cathy McCrackan with questions. These drafts were based mainly on classes taught in the past but additional rearranging was necessary with Hal Brody and George Rossetti on sabbatical leaves. Bryan Huey suggested adding the schedules to the website to share with students and to discuss at the faculty retreat.
V. Graduate Issues: Bryan Huey
A. Fixed Days/Times for Various Oral Exams: As the graduate student population expands, it is more and more difficult to schedule oral exams. The Graduate Committee is recommending fixed dates and times to help faculty scheduling and improve attendance. The committee is looking for comments by faculty. Discussion followed about possible slots, consistency and flexibility. George Rossetti noted there should always be cases where exceptions are made. The Graduate Committee will work on a proposal of dates and times for faculty to review.
B. Graduate Student Speaking Opportunities: The Graduate Committee is proposing different speaking opportunities for graduate students so they can become actively involved and provide a chance to challenge each other. Suggestions included: 1) students give 90-second elevator talks; 2) day-long conference for graduate students with one particular theme where a graduate student award of the year could be presented; 3) student speaking competition could be offered during the seminar slot. Mark Aindow noted because of the large student body, students aren’t aware of what other students are working on.
C. Qualifying Exam: The Qualifying Exam is scheduled for Monday, January 6. Students have been informed. The format is 40 questions; 20 questions with all different topics must be answered.
D. Graduate Studies at UConn for Recruitment Purposes: When faculty present lectures at other institutions, the Graduate Committee is asking faculty to begin presentations with an introductory slide about UConn MSE for recruitment purposes that promotes the department. George Rossetti suggested adding a photo of campus in addition to listing the research.
E. Graduate Admissions: Trista Albert, the MSE/Polymer graduate admissions coordinator, has resigned for another position. This position is a fully funded IMS position. The goal is to hire someone on special payroll immediately. Steve Suib and Mark Aindow are considering all options. MSE receives approximately 300 graduate applications yearly, which Trista would pre-screen. Bryan Huey asked faculty to let him know if you have prospective students in mind so they don’t fall through the cracks.

VI. Undergraduate Issues: Rainer Hebert
A. Courses and Curricula Topics for Spring 2014:
   1. CHEG 3156 in Engineering Physics Program will no longer be a required course and would be replaced with an additional professional elective.
   2. ENGR 3195 for Nanomaterials Concentration: Requirements need to be adjusted to include Bryan Huey’s ENGR 3195 course as a possible substitute for 4240 or 4241. Other suggestions included ENGR 2243 as an elective. Students can select an elective course so they don’t have to wait. This would improve the situation and make it easier for students to complete their requirements.
   3. Pre-requisites for Ceramics Course: Many MSE courses list MSE 2002 as the only prerequisite, which is an error; the prerequisite should read MSE 2002 or MSE 2102. Information will be sent to faculty on the proposed changes.
B. Update on AHS Hartford Scholarship: Due to the increase in the stock market, the scholarship now has a value of $27,000. The income will generate one or two scholarships (valued at approximately $750) to be awarded every year.
C. ABET: Hal Brody
   At this time, there is no news to report. Work will need to be continued on A-K and measurements made as a baseline this year to compare in six years.
D. Senior Design: Hal Brody
   Written progress reports are due from students; faculty should not be giving a grade for any work not detailed. Students with incomplete grades have until February 10, 2014 to satisfy the requirements fully.
E. Owen F. Devereux Materials Science and Engineering Excellence Scholarship: Hal Brody

Hal Brody noted the major objective is recruiting high achieving students. He emphasized the importance of merit scholarships for high achieving juniors and seniors. He is proposing a scholarship fund in honor of Owen Devereux, an exceptionally good MSE department head recruited as a professor in 1968. The Foundation requires $10,000 to start a scholarship named for faculty. Hal Brody asked all faculty to consider making a donation and noted the unanimous support of the faculty shows the strength of the department. He hopes this to be the first in several scholarships named for faculty. Tax deductible checks can be made payable to the UConn Foundation with a note: Owen F. Devereux Excellence Fund.

VII. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, 1/13: MSE Faculty Meeting (11:00AM - Noon), IMS-147A
Monday, 2/10: MSE Faculty Meeting (11:00AM - Noon), IMS-147A
Monday, 3/3: MSE Faculty Meeting (11:00AM - Noon), IMS-147A
Monday, 4/7: MSE Faculty Meeting (11:00AM - Noon), IMS-147A
Monday, 5/12: MSE Industrial Board Meeting (9:00AM - 1:00PM), IMS-159
Monday, 5/19: MSE Faculty Retreat, Time and Location TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri Lafontaine
Administrative Services Specialist