FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Faculty Affairs Committee met at 2 pm on  February 1, 2011 in 4339 FAB.
FAC members were present:  M. Cooney; M. Horn, P. Jarosz, E. Puscheck, M. Sengstock; J. Sondheimer.
Liaisons Present:  S. Calkins; K. Skillin.
Other Academic Senate Committees' Representatives Present:  Tyrone Austin, Advising/C&I; Karen Feathers, C&I; Naida Simon, SAC; Christian Kreipke, Anatomy, Research.
Representatives of College of Engineering:  Nabil Sarhan, ECE; James Woodyard, ECE; Yang Zhao, ECE.
Representatives of College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:  Ming Dong, CS; Marcus Friedrich, Biology; Narendra Goel, CS; Andrian Marcus, CS; Loren Schweibert, CS; Weisong Shi, CS.
Representatives of Engineering Alumni Association:  Joe Boelter, Past Pres.; Anthony Duminski, Pres.; John Micheli, VP.

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm by Chair, Mary Cay Sengstock.  This was a special meeting, called to examine the Provost's proposal to move the Department of Computer Science (CS) from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) to the College of Engineering (COE).  The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) has been charged by the Policy Committee to analyze faculty views on this issue.  The Student Affairs (SAC), Curriculum and Instruction (C&I), and Research Committees have also been charged to review the issue; hence representatives from these committees attended.  Faculty members from both colleges were invited to attend the meeting and present their views.  Representatives from the College of Engineering Alumni Association also attended.

The Chair opened the meeting by inviting faculty from the respective colleges to present their views on the proposal.

Several faculty members from the Computer Science Department described the manner in which their department was engaged in planning for the move.  The Undergraduate Committee had been involved in developing Bachelor's degree programs which would include the Engineering College requirements, as opposed to the CLAS requirements currently in place.  Faculty had also discussed the issue of moving to COE, and most faculty members were comfortable with the move.

Some members of the Engineering College expressed concern that there had been little advance notice about the proposed move, and little rationale for making the move at this point.  It was pointed out that the Provost had presented the proposal in a very short message, providing a list of reasons at a later point.  There have been claims that there will be no impact on enrollment, that increased research funds will be generated, etc.  However, these were merely claims.  There had been no quantitative data collected to determine the likely impact of this move.  Of particular concern was the perceived lack of planning for allocating resources once the move had occurred.  CS faculty, however, were of the opinion that the department would be moved as a whole, with all faculty, staff, students, space, equipment, and other resources.  They understood this to be the case when an entire department was moved.  Some persons present raised the issue as to the impact such a move would have on the college which loses the department.  However, no CLAS

representatives presented views on this issue.  The Chair indicated that faculty representative groups from both colleges had been invited to present their views; she expected to receive these reports within the next week, and the committee will have to meet again to review these documents.

Yang Zhao expressed concern that there did not seem to be a clear indication that the University had considered how the proposal fit into the strategic plan of the University.

The organization of the move, should it occur, was of great concern to several people.  These concerns related to faculty development and advancement; the impact on student progression towards their degrees; management of the transfer of resources from CLAS to COE.  "Resources" include everything from space, to staff, to equipment.  In particular, how would the loss of these resources impact on CLAS?

Several issues related to the move were discussed.  They were:  Student issues, Faculty issues, and Administrative issues.

STUDENT ISSUES:
The Director of the Undergraduate Program spoke of ways in which the Bachelor's program was being changed to adapt to the requirements for Engineering degrees.  A representative from the Senate Student Affairs Committee pointed out that it was critical that students already in the program must be allowed to complete their degrees without having to repeat requirements.

Concern was raised about the Bachelor's degrees which had existed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; there might continue to be students who had interests in a Computer Science specialization, but continued to have an interest in a Liberal Arts and Science degree.  Several persons present said that such opportunities have existed at other institutions, as well as at Wayne State University.  However, they required knowledgeable, diligent, and committed advisers, who would assist students in achieving their program goals.  It is imperative that such advising expertise be developed, particularly if the university decides to pursue a new computer science degree program for CLAS.

The CS Graduate Director indicated he did not believe that there would be problems with the graduate program.  As it currently stands, the CS graduate program often accepts students from diverse backgrounds into their degree programs, though they may have to take some prerequisite courses.  Hence the graduate program is unlikely to change much.

The issue of tuition was raised.  Engineering graduate tuition is approximately $75-80 higher per credit hour than in CLAS.  Will this lead to a decrease in computer science students?  Some felt it might; others thought the difference was relatively small.

FACULTY ISSUES:
Faculty Retention:  A member of the Engineering faculty recalled an event in which a departmental reorganization resulted in several faculty leaving.  He thought this might occur in this instance as well.  It was pointed out that it would be wise to examine the reasons why this occurred, in order to ensure this would not happen in this instance.

Tenure and Promotion:  Junior faculty's opportunities for tenure may be different in the College of Engineering than in CLAS.  Members of the Computer Science faculty stated that the Department had a tenure and promotion factors statement; this would not change with the move to the College of Engineering.  However, others pointed out departmental recommendations must undergo review in the college committees.  It is possible that the College of Engineering committees might view these issues differently from the CLAS.

Faculty "Fit" in the New College:  Members of the Computer Science Department faculty did not think there would be much problem with faculty adapting to the Engineering College as opposed to Liberal Arts and Sciences.  Across the country, Computer Science is located in both Arts and Sciences and in Engineering.  Several members of the faculty have their degrees from Engineering colleges; indeed, some members have actually moved between CLAS and COE at Wayne State University during their tenure here.  Movement between the colleges should not present a problem.

Impact on Collaborative Activities:  Faculty in Computer Science have collaborative relations with faculty members in numerous other departments.  Some are in CLAS; some are in Engineering; many are in other colleges, such as Medicine.  They did not believe the change in college would impact these collaborations.  They believed that collaborations were based on the individuals involved, rather than on the college in which they were housed.

Impact on Grantsmanship:  The Provost had indicated that he believed the Department might be more effective in getting grants from outside agencies if it were located in the College of Engineering.  Most faculty present seemed to believe they were successful in getting grants, and there would be little change with a move to Engineering.

Relations with Industry:  The Engineering Alumni Association representatives present indicated they believed that relations between the Computer Science Department and industries in the area would improve with the move, since these industries are more accustomed to working with Engineering Colleges rather than Liberal Arts and Science Colleges.  They thought this might be an advantage to students.  However, some members of the Computer Science Department indicated that they already had joint job fairs with the Engineering College.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES:
Several issues were raised concerning the manner in which the move would occur, and how they would be addressed.  Several people thought these should be addressed prior to a recommendation regarding the move.  However, others pointed out that such issues take time to resolve.  If the University waits to resolve each of them, the move might not occur for years.  However, it should be made clear that there should be a clear indication that the departments, colleges, and higher administration were prepared to deal with all of these issues.  The administrative issues included issues of space, staffing, and faculty placement, in addition to the faculty and student issues raised separately.

It was pointed out that proposals to move Computer Science to the College of Engineering had occurred in the past, but the move had never been finalized.  The question was raised as to

whether the proposal was actually a serious one this time.  Steven Calkins from the Provost's office indicated he thought it was a serious proposal.  The Chair of FAC also indicated she thought it was seriously presented, since this was the first time the proposal had been sent to the Academic Senate for consideration.  This was also the first time the proposal came from the upper administration; past proposals had come from the chair of the Computer Science Department.

SUMMARY:
The group as a whole seemed in agreement that, if this proposal were to be approved, a great deal of planning needed to go into the process.  Members of the CS faculty indicated they were already making such plans. However, it was not clear that similar plans were occurring at the level of the 2 colleges involved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

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Approved at the Faculty Affairs Committee meeting of March 22, 2011