COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING FACULTY ORGANIZATION (CEFO)

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 26, 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, Anthony Bombik, Nan BouSaba, Nicole Braxtan, Aidan Browne, Tara Cavalline, Valentina Cecchi, Don Chen, Youxing Chen, Harish Cherukuri, Jim Conrad, Michelle Demers, Kosta Falaggis, Wei Fan, Wei Gao, Amirhossein Ghasemi, Meg Harkins, Tao Hong, Simon Hsiang, Olya Keen, Rob Keynton, Kevin Lawton, Churlzu Lim, Kevin Lindsay, Dipankar Maity, Madhav Manjrekar, Jose Martins do Outeiro, Glen Moglen, Edward Morse, Brigid Mullany, Mariya Munir, Asis Nasipuri, Dave Naylor, John Nettles, David Newell, Tobi Ogunro, Srinivas Pulugurtha, Praveen Ramaprabhu, Jeff Raquet, Fareena Saqib, Ron Sass, Sam Shue, Ron Smelser, Michael Smith, Kamia Smith, Stuart Smith, Lingguan Song, Tyler Stover, Bett Tempest, Mesbah Uddin, Regina Vrikkis, Ke Wang, Weimin Wang, Kimberly Warren, Qiuming Wei, Matthew Whelan, Wesley Williams, Jay Wu, Linda Xie, Terry Xu, Yong Zhang, HaiTao Zhang

(66 Attendees)

AGENDA:

1. Welcome from CEFO President Jim Conrad

Jim Conrad called the meeting to order at 11:38 AM and introduced the agenda. A motion was passed to accept this agenda. There were no objections to accepting this agenda, and the meeting moved forward.

2. Minutes from the last CEFO meeting (August 29, 2023)

CEFO Secretary Kosta Falaggis presented the minutes from the last CEFO meetings. He asked the assembly whether any changes needed to be made or comments needed to be documented. Nobody in the assembly raised a concern. A motion passed to accept those minutes. There were no objections to accepting the minutes from the last meeting, and the meeting moved forward.

3. Short remarks from CEFO President Jim Conrad

Jim Conrad gave some remarks regarding the CEFO constitution and why we are meeting. He mentioned we would meet this semester on a few Tuesdays between 11:30 AM and 12:45 PM in G 287 and that the minutes of the prior meeting and the agenda of the next meeting would be sent out by e-mail.

4. Welcome from CoE Dean Robert Keynton

Dean Keynton gave a presentation:

- He mentioned a couple of media spotlights, the social media impacts, and other community updates.
- In the US news & World report, UNC Charlotte

- o climbed the rank to 142 in "Best Engineering School (graduate)",
- o climbed the rank to 120 in "Best Engineering School (undergraduate)",
- o maintained the rank of 77 in Civil Engineering
- o climbed the rank to 93 in Electrical Engineering
- o climbed the rank to 89 in Mechanical Engineering

The college …

- …hired 15 new faculty started between Fall '22 and Fall '23,
- …hired 2 new Department Chairs hired: CEE & ETCM, and
- …18 new staff members were recruited and hired.

The dean also reported the unfortunate and sad news that six members of the college community have passed away.

- The dean also updated the faculty on the "Engineering a Smart & Secure Future for North Carolina," which is a $10 million programmatic state investment initiative. The college will receive $600,000 per year for two years. A large portion of the funds goes to CCI to meet their growth needs.
- Some funds went to the NC BATT CAVE in Spring 23.
- The dean also updated the faculty members on the enrollment numbers, and the COE enrollment numbers seem to have stagnated over the last ten years for undergraduate and graduate students. In contrast, CCI's enrollment numbers are steadily growing.
- The NC state finalized the budget last week. The items of interest to the college are
  - o pay increase over the next two years: 4% Year 1 and 3% Year 2
  - o $5M for Engineering a Smart & Secure NC Future (the state wants to continue investing in engineering, which is a good thing)
  - o There was also a $10 million budget request for CCI and SDS, but the state did not support that this year.
- The dean also gave an update on successful awards, where LCOE had an increase of 31%.
- Finally, the dean gave an overview of the current COE initiatives, which were
  - o (1) Common First Year,
  - o (2) Global Fab Lab,
  - o (3) Construction Engineering program,
  - o (4) Aviation Innovation and Research (AIR) Institute, and
  - o (5) Department of Bioengineering.

5. Common First-Year updates presented by the CFY committee chair Aidan Browne

Aidan Browne gave an update on the common-first year. There were no significant updates.

One faculty member suggested that the CFY committee should seek faculty input regularly so that the recommendations made by the CFY committee are more aligned with the needs of the individual programs.

Aidan Browne mentioned that regular brown-bag seminars are planned to seek faculty input.

6. UNC Policy Faculty Workload (UNC Policy Manual 400.3.4) presented by Matthew Whelan

This is a new item of business. This new policy replaces the current workload policy, which involves the BOG reviewing workload, defining teaching workload by institutional Carnegie classification (rather than individual faculty), and collecting two-year-old Delaware teaching data (that can't be verified) to determine if institutions are meeting expectations.

- Delegated responsibility for monitoring and tracking faculty activities and workload down to the Board of Trustees for the individual institutions. And they've set up some requirements within this policy of how that is going.
- Outlines what campus workload policies should look like, shifts workload oversight to the Board of Trustees level, and applies workload expectations based on the individual faculty member at the institution.
- Provides a baseline teaching expectation of 24 credit hours per academic year, followed by how institutional policies can adjust this expectation considering other duties. Flexibility to establish plans that can substitute teaching credit hours for components of research and service, where 24 credit hours is the full-time equivalency.
- Policies need to be defined by the Chancellor and the Provost
- Each institution must compile an annual report of the previous year's faculty activity to be presented and approved by the Board of Trustees and submitted to the UNC President.
- One potential positive with this: Matthew Whelan saw some communication that he believes was from the division of research indicating that our internal expenditures, our faculty salaries, or at least a portion of our faculty salaries that are associated with research are not currently being counted as research expenditures for the university, which does impact how we are granted and evaluated in terms of our research activities. Hence, by having a policy where we quantify time that's devoted to research, we can defend that amount of time that's devoted to research.
- One faculty member suggested including Senior Design projects in that calculation, and the dean clarified that this is not a college-level initiative. Still, it comes directly from the board of trustees.
- The CEFO president, Jim Conrad, also added that the dean has asked the chairs to weigh in on this by the end of the month. However, this is the faculty's opportunity to weigh in and say, "Hey, have you thought about this as a workload component or this? So I could ask the dean, have you considered being a CEFO officer as part of that?" He also mentioned that one time, they were contemplating at the university level service to have a stipend associated with it because nobody was signing up for these volunteer positions. But now that it might be tied to you can serve in a university position or teach a class that might get more people.
- One faculty member mentioned that he did not see any emphasis on external professional service. A couple of examples were given by other faculty members (ABET, IEEE chairmanships, Chair of Secretaries with positions), which require some time commitment. It was emphasized that if someone is a member of the executive committee, that may not be considered as significant time. However, suppose someone is an executive officer in a professional society. In that case, that takes a significant amount of time. The same applies to an associate editor of some journals, which also takes time but brings visibility to the professional community.

- One faculty member mentioned that we need to be careful what kind of metric we are creating because if a faculty member does not get sufficient credit for a given service, then nobody will do that kind of service.
- Dean Keynton mentioned that it should be implemented in Fall 2024. However, each college does not have to implement the same plan. The plans will be similar but not identical.
- One faculty member mentioned that it is more of an administrative burden on the deans and chairs. And he thinks in addition to trying to think of things that should be counted, we should also think of ways this process could be streamlined. So can we interpret individuals to be small groups where everyone walks away with their assignment, as opposed to the chairs having to meet with every single faculty member every single year? Or, more frequently, they're just a remark?
- Dean Keynton mentioned that the annual evaluation is the best time to talk about the workload for the upcoming year. So it's all done in one step.

7. Voting Options presented by Kosta Falaggis

This is a new item for discussion.

- One faculty member approached Kosta Falaggis (in his capacity as CEFO secretary) because he would like to be engaged in CEFO governance but cannot attend all meetings due to other commitments (meetings related to DoD funding).
- Kosta Falaggis gave an overview regarding voting options of the various UNCC constitutions, which showed there is no clear language on proxy voting, except for the Honors Council.
- Professional organizations such as IEEE don't do voting by proxies. Other professional organizations, like SPIE or Optica, actually allow voting by proxy.
- Robert's Rules discouraged proxy voting because proxy voting may also lead to some manipulation, but it's not prohibited.
- The speaker suggested that we may need to develop some language on that for further clarification. Also, if there are some special circumstances, we should allow voting by proxy.
- The speaker indicated that today's meeting is actually to hear from everybody the thoughts and the ideas regarding the voting options.
- One faculty member supports the idea of proxy voting conceptually because he travels fairly frequently, and he wishes to be engaged in the process and have his voice heard. He understands the opportunity for manipulation and is concerned about simply sending an email saying, "This is what I support ahead of time," because it is anticipating a specific vote being held, which might be amended, and it is unclear what happens afterward. He feels better having someone who represents his vote. He does not think it should be standard procedure, but he thinks it should be for a specific meeting. You send an email maybe to the officer saying in this meeting, this person may vote for me.
- Jim Conrad mentioned that important issues, e.g., the CFY, should be online voting. We don't want online voting to approve the minutes, the agenda, and other items. If the faculty present voted to say this should go before the entire faculty board or the entire faculty for an online vote, that would be covered in a meeting. That way, the discussion is done, but then the vote and the issues are put out there, and then the minutes are prepared, and a vote is sent out, or a ballot is sent out so that you can see what was covered.

- One faculty member mentioned that we have to have a way to decide how big an issue has to be before we do that. Because if somebody can just raise their hand anytime, it's a lot of work to do after that (he speaks as somebody who's done a few of these over the last couple of years). Hence, he thinks we would just have to try to find a way to describe that long-term agenda items have that option, but short-term agenda items don't. One concern for him with proxies is that we often are on a short-term cycle with many of our small businesses, and proxies are more appropriate for discussions that have been going on for months; examples are found in Congress. In North Carolina, Congress takes a long time to pass something, and everybody involved knows what the discussion was. However, on the short things, discussion happens here for about 15 minutes, and somebody may miss those discussions. And so that's why I guess I have a fundamental issue with proxies.

- The first faculty member who spoke on that issue responded that he was surprised to hear that online voting is so difficult that there must be tools that allow this. Certainly, we're expected to be able to do it at the drop of our hat in class, do poll anywhere. And I understand that we have security issues, but we need to improve. If that's a stumbling block to how we run our organization, we're doing something wrong.

8. Closing

All items on the agenda have been covered. The chair asked the assembly whether any other items shoulg be brought before the college faculty. Nobody responded, and the chair ended the meeting ended at 12:21PM.