

# COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING FACULTY ORGANIZATION (CEFO)

## MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 11:30 AM

Lunch available at 11:30 AM

EPIC G287

The following individuals signed the attendance sheet:

Yawo Amengonu, Yamilka Baez-Rivera, Nicole Braxtan, Aidan Browne, Valentina Cecchi, Shen-En Chen, Youxing Chen, Harish Cherukuri, Michelle Demers, Gretchen Dietz, Terence Fagan, Kosta Falaggis, Wei Fan, Austin Fifield, Christopher Green, Courtney Green, John Hall, Meg Harkins, Tao Hong, Simon Hsiang, Erina Joyee, Olya Keen, Kevin Lawton, Lisa Lattimore, Churlzu Lim, Kevin Lindsay, Dipankar Maity, Glen Moglen, Arindam Mukherjee, Asis Nasipuri, David Newell, John Nettles, Maciej Noras, Tobi Ogunro, Jaewon Oh, Ertunga Ozelkan, Belinda Parker, Praveen Ramaprabhu, Jeff Raquet, William Saunders, Sam Shue, Ron Smelser, Kamia Smith, Courtney Smith-Orr, Lingguang Song, Tyler Stover, Mei Sun, Brett Tempest, Regina Vrikkis, Cory Wang, Kimberly Warren, Dave Weggel, Qiuming Wei, Matthew Whelan, Jay Wu, Terry Xu, Yong Zhang, HaiTao Zhang,

The following individuals attended but did not sign the attendance sheet:

Aidan Browne, Jim Conrad, Stuart Smith, and Mesbah Uddin.

(60 attendees)

### AGENDA:

#### 1. Welcome from CEFO President Jim Conrad

CEFO president Jim Conrad initiated the meeting at 11:38 AM. He swiftly moved to review the agenda, which was unanimously approved without modifications.

#### 2. Minutes from the last CEFO meeting (January 23, 2024)

CEFO Secretary Kosta Falaggis presented the minutes from the last CEFO meetings. He confirmed the distribution of the minutes from the January 23, 2024, meeting, noting no comments were received. Because there were no objections to the minutes, the minutes were approved as presented.

#### 3. Short remarks from CEFO President Jim Conrad

President Jim Conrad opened the discussion on the Common First Year (CFY) curriculum, underscoring the importance of this segment as the meeting's core focus. He initiated his remarks by reminding attendees of the faculty's constitutional mandate. According to the Faculty Constitution, the faculty holds the authority and responsibility for curriculum decisions, ensuring that these align with university requirements. This autonomy empowers the faculty to shape educational pathways that best serve the students, highlighting the Common First Year curriculum as a pivotal area of faculty governance.

President Conrad emphasized the operational aspects of CEFO meetings, urging faculty members to avoid scheduling conflicts that could impede attendance at future meetings. He humorously checked with one faculty member about not scheduling classes during CEFO meeting times, illustrating a

collective commitment to maximizing participation. This anecdote served as a reminder for all faculty to consider CEFO meetings when planning their academic and research commitments, utilizing tools like Google Calendar for better coordination and ensuring broad attendance.

Acknowledging the practical aspects of meeting logistics, President Conrad noted the adequate provision of food, extended an invitation to those who had not RSVP'd, and touched upon the observation of early departures at 12:30 PM. He indicated that the executive committee would review the possibility of adjusting the standard meeting conclusion time to accommodate faculty schedules better, though the current end time was 12:45 PM.

Addressing the procedural framework for the meeting, President Conrad introduced a review of Robert's Rules of Order, setting the stage for a structured discussion. He outlined a democratic approach to ensure every faculty member, not just attendees, has a voice in the crucial decision-making process regarding the Common First Year curriculum. This approach was marked by the intention to create a speaker's list, enabling orderly contributions from interested faculty members. Jim Conrad wanted to manage the discussion time efficiently, so he proposed a one-minute speaking limit to accommodate as many voices as possible.

In concluding his update, Jim Conrad argued for inclusive faculty involvement in the upcoming Common First Year curriculum vote. He stressed the Dean's endorsement of widespread faculty engagement in this decision, underscoring the importance of capturing the collective wisdom and insights of the entire faculty body. The announcement of a vote to be conducted after the meeting underscored a commitment to democratic processes within the faculty governance structure.

#### **4. Deans Update presented by Brett Tempest (Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs).**

In Dean Robert Keynton's absence, Brett Tempest, the Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, stepped forward to deliver the Dean's update. Emphasizing the collaborative spirit and collective efforts that led to the current proposition, Brett Tempest began by expressing his appreciation for the opportunity to engage in this crucial dialogue about the Common First Year (CFY) program. He acknowledged his readiness to seize any moment to allow substantive discussion on academic matters despite not preparing a detailed report for this meeting.

Brett Tempest extended profound gratitude towards the committee responsible for the CFY program's conceptualization and development. He highlighted the enormous undertaking of reaching a consensus that resonated with representatives from all departments, describing the current proposal as a starting point rather than a final, polished product. This initiative, he noted, was the culmination of intense negotiations and thoughtful considerations, setting the stage for what he termed as the "creativity and magic" phase of designing an engaging and marketable first-year experience for students.

The Associate Dean underscored two significant achievements the CFY program aimed to accomplish. First, the program is designed to offer flexibility for students to explore and move between different majors within their first year at college. This flexibility is critical in preventing students from being locked into a specific path based on a decision made at 17 or 18, potentially facing significant hurdles if they wish to change their direction later. Second, the CFY program seeks to address the challenge faced by students unprepared to begin their college journey with Calculus I, offering them a structured pathway to pursue their chosen career goals without delay. Brett Tempest highlighted the importance of this inclusivity, acknowledging the difficulty some students face in fitting into their desired majors within a reasonable timeframe due to their initial math readiness.

In concluding his update, Brett Tempest reiterated his anticipation for the day's discussions and the forthcoming vote on the CFY program. He emphasized that the initiative represents a critical step in enhancing the university's engineering education experience, making it more adaptable and responsive to students' needs and aspirations. By laying out these objectives and achievements, Tempest invited the faculty to engage in a meaningful dialogue on the CFY program, signifying a collective effort to reimagine the engineering curriculum for incoming students.

## **5. Review of Common First Year Program and Presentation of Motion by Aidan Browne**

Aidan Browne provided an update on the Common First Year (CFY) initiative, outlining the progress and the steps leading to the upcoming vote. His presentation aimed to clarify the CFY committee's efforts and the rationale behind the voting timing, leveraging PowerPoint slides 10 to 14 to facilitate his explanations.

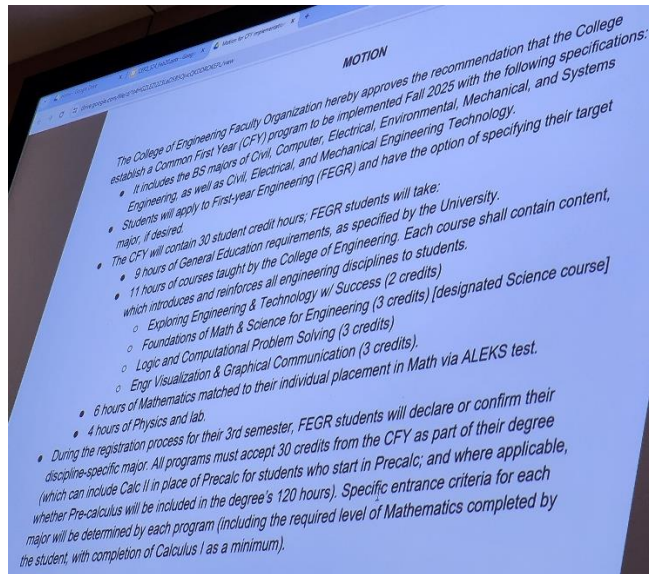
Aidan Browne emphasized the critical juncture at which the CFY initiative stands, necessitating a faculty-wide decision on its future direction. He noted the preparatory work required should the initiative advance, including forming specialized committees across various departments. These committees would be responsible for refining and implementing the curriculum, incorporating insights from faculty across disciplines.

He also acknowledged the collective efforts that have brought the initiative to its current stage. He pointed out that the CFY committee unanimously decided to present this motion for a broader faculty discussion and vote. During his presentation, Aidan Browne mentioned corrections to the documentation and highlighted the committee's response to feedback received throughout the process.

A significant portion of Aidan Browne's update was dedicated to explaining the proposed electronic voting process. He detailed how the Qualtrics platform would ensure an inclusive and anonymous voting process, allowing every faculty member to participate. This was done because some faculty members feared repercussions. An important procedural note regarding the administration of the electronic voting process was shared. Initially, Stephanie Galloway, a professional familiar with the Qualtrics platform and external to the CFY committee, was designated to oversee the setup and execution of the voting process to ensure impartiality and efficiency. However, due to unforeseen medical circumstances, Stephanie Galloway could not fulfill this role as planned. Considering this development, Aidan Browne was transferred to initiate the voting process. This adjustment was communicated to the faculty with the assurance that the integrity and confidentiality of the voting process would be maintained. The change was made to ensure that the vote could proceed without delay.

Afterward, Aidan Browne presented a motion for the CFY program's approval and sought consensus on the proposed electronic voting method. He underscored the importance of faculty input in decision-making and emphasized a 72-hour voting window to accommodate diverse schedules and encourage broad participation.

A photo of the motion presented at the meeting is shown below:



Aidan Browne asked whether there were any objections.

- One faculty member voiced concerns regarding the fairness of allowing programs not participating in the CFY program (e.g., Fire Safety and Construction Management) to influence the vote outcome, suggesting that the decision-making process might disproportionately impact departments more directly involved in the program. Jim Conrad dismissed this concern, referring to parliamentary procedures and the principles governing the voting process within the College of Engineering Faculty Organization (CEFO). He clarified that, per CEFO's constitution, all motions presented must be open to a vote by the entire membership, reinforcing the collective responsibility in decision-making regardless of direct involvement in the program. The faculty member insisted that his objection is on record because faculty members not participating in the CFY do vote on this motion. Jim Conrad asked the faculty member whether he objected to the way we voted on the CFY motion, to which the faculty member replied, “Yes, it is the way we vote.” Jim Conrad then announced that the entire CEFO faculty members present will have to vote by ballot on “*whether we open up this motion to the entire CFO membership who may not be here, or we just do it with those who are present.*” Jim Conrad then took a few minutes to revise Robert’s rules. After that, Jim Conrad addressed the assembly that according to Robert's Rules of Order number 12, the way we take a vote was recommended for an electronic offline vote. Since there was an objection, as a chair, Jim Conrad entertained a motion to take this vote electronically over the next 72 hours as suggested. He then pointed to an assembly member and asked whether he would like to move the motion, which he did, and another faculty member seconded that motion. The motion to hold an electronic vote passed.

Afterward, the floor opened for discussion.

- One faculty member sought clarification on whether the current motion included definitive approval of the new courses' content or if there was an allowance for subsequent modifications. This inquiry highlighted uncertainties surrounding the flexibility and finality of the course designs within the CFY program and the procedural approach to curriculum development post-vote. Responding to this concern, Aidan Browne, the chair of the CFY committee, addressed the process for developing and refining the curriculum. He indicated that the courses presented

for approval were intended as a starting framework rather than finalized syllabi. This framework, described as a "functional sovereign body," was meant to serve as an initial guide for further detailed development by groups of faculties from various departments. These groups would be responsible for deciding the specifics of course content, including the possibility of adding or removing topics. He acknowledged the feedback incorporated into the proposal but noted that the syllabi, particularly regarding chemistry topics, had sparked considerable debate. He suggested that resolving these debates and finalizing course contents would require further work beyond the current vote. This explanation hinted at a process still in progress, with significant details yet to be ironed out.

- A faculty member expressed significant concern about the coverage of chemistry and the foundations of math and science. The current syllabus division appears to be half chemistry and half vectors. Civil Engineering likes its students to take chemistry. The current CFY position is that "things need to be tweaked," but this issue is not a "tweak;" it is a major change. Responding to these concerns, Aidan Browne clarified the committee's approach and the rationale behind the curriculum's current structure. He acknowledged that there was a last-minute change in the Civil Engineering position regarding that class. The Civil Engineering program originally intended to cover chemistry content using that class. However, they decided to keep Chemistry I in their sophomore year and preferred to have this course as a 3 credit hours course.
- In a detailed exchange during the faculty meeting, questions arose concerning the voting process for the Common First Year (CFY) program and the potential consequences of this vote. One faculty member inquired specifically about the implications of the vote's outcome, questioning whether a 'yes' decision would cement the curriculum as currently proposed, requiring only minor adjustments, or if there might be subsequent opportunities for more significant revisions or even another vote on the curriculum's specifics. Additionally, the faculty member sought to understand the ramifications of a 'no' vote: would it necessitate a complete reevaluation and redevelopment of the CFY proposal, or could it result in the abandonment of the CFY course development effort entirely? Aidan Browne responded by providing insights into the procedural aspects and the governance framework surrounding the vote. He indicated that the forthcoming vote was primarily about deciding whether to advance with the proposed CFY framework, not finalizing every curriculum detail. He highlighted that, according to the faculty governance structure, faculty recommendations on curriculum matters are directed toward the administration for ultimate decision-making and implementation. This clarification suggested that, while faculty approval is crucial, the detailed execution of the curriculum, including addressing any subsequent modifications, falls under administrative responsibility. Aidan Browne further noted that if the initiative is not approved, the administrative leadership would determine the direction forward based on their assessment of the situation and potential next steps. Addressing the logistical complexities of implementing the CFY curriculum, he mentioned establishing four groups tasked with the curriculum's detailed planning and execution.
- A faculty member posed a question on the implications of a 'yes' vote: *would it lock in the current curriculum structure, thereby limiting the possibility of introducing more chemistry in the future, or was there room for significant modifications post-vote?* Responding to this inquiry, Aidan Browne clarified that the current curriculum proposal was not final and could undergo changes based on its implementation and effectiveness. He suggested that the curriculum is expected to evolve, indicating a willingness to consider adjustments, including the potential for more chemistry, as the program progresses. This perspective implied an

understanding that the curriculum development process is iterative and responsive to the educational needs identified after the initial rollout. Further elaboration on the decision-making process underscored the complexity of balancing various academic requirements and preferences. It was acknowledged that the proposed curriculum represents a compromise. This compromise was described as a middle ground, reflecting the varied stakes and perspectives within the faculty. The discussion highlighted the dynamic nature of curriculum planning, emphasizing that the vote on the CFY program's current framework does not preclude future adjustments. It revealed an openness to revising the curriculum in response to feedback and the practical experience of implementing the CFY program while acknowledging the challenges of aligning diverse academic priorities and expectations.

- A faculty member inquired about viewing vote distribution post-vote, questioning if results would be detailed by the department. The response clarified that while overall results would be shared, departmental breakdowns would not, emphasizing the collective decision-making of the college as a unified body.
- A faculty member questioned whether changes to the curriculum, specifically regarding the presence of chemistry, would prompt another vote. The response indicated that removing chemistry isn't an option, emphasizing the curriculum's intention to include it. Any curriculum changes would undergo the university's standard course review process, involving various committees. This suggests that while the CFY initiative has faculty input, final adjustments lie with broader academic and administrative procedures.
- A faculty member raised a concern about the decision to conduct the vote for the Common First Year (CFY) initiative at the college level, questioning why faculty members from departments not directly involved in the CFY programs were eligible to vote. This was posed against the backdrop of whether a department- or program-level vote might be more fitting, given the direct impact on those areas. In response, Aidan Browne explained that the college lacks a procedural mechanism for conducting such votes exclusively at the department or program level. As the College Faculty Assembly (CFA) Constitution outlines, the existing governance structure mandates that all matters requiring a vote be presented to the entire college faculty, irrespective of the direct involvement of individual departments or programs. This approach ensures broad participation and reflects the college's commitment to collective decision-making. Aidan Browne confirmed that this approach affected departmental autonomy in curriculum matters and noted that the current constitutional framework does not support segregating voting rights by department or program involvement.
- A faculty member inquired about the voting criteria for the decision, asking if a simple majority would determine the outcome and whether it pertains to the votes cast or requires a majority of all eligible voters. The clarification confirmed that the decision would be based on a simple majority of the votes cast.
- A faculty member suggested considering two versions of the CFY proposal: one as currently outlined with math and science and another version incorporating chemistry prominently. This suggestion aimed to prevent the entire CFY initiative from being rejected due to disagreements over the chemistry component, proposing sequential voting on these versions to allow for flexibility in approval. Aidan Browne's response to this suggestion highlighted the current procedural context, noting that a motion was already under consideration. It was implied that introducing a new proposal or amendment to the motion would require navigating the existing procedural rules, suggesting that if the community had strong feelings about the inclusion of chemistry, those views should be directly reflected in their vote on the current motion. The conversation touched on the procedural complexities of altering a motion already on the floor.

and hinted at the possibility of revisiting the idea, if necessary, based on the outcomes of the existing vote.

- A faculty member questioned if the CFY curriculum, particularly for a course that might replace chemistry, was modeled after an existing course used by the mechanical engineering program. This course, known for integrating physics and chemistry, is an alternative to a traditional chemistry class within that program. Aidan Browne confirmed that the course in question indeed blends physics and chemistry. He clarified that while the referenced course is a four-hour course accepted in lieu of a traditional chemistry course in the mechanical engineering program, the course under consideration for the CFY is designed as a three-hour course.

CEFO Chair Jim Conrad handed the speakership over to Matthew Whelan (past secretary and president-elect of CEFO) because he had some remarks on the common first year.

- Jim Conrad, speaking from his position as the undergraduate coordinator for the ECE Department, shared insights on the debate surrounding the inclusion of chemistry in the Common First Year (CFY) program. He highlighted that the discussion about chemistry's role had been particularly time-consuming, noting the variance in departmental requirements, with some, like electrical and computer engineering, not traditionally including chemistry in their curricula. Despite this variance, Jim Conrad described the decision to support the CFY program as a concession made to foster a unified first-year experience deemed vital for student development. Conrad expressed satisfaction with the CFY course's interdisciplinary approach, which encompasses math, physics, and an introductory level of chemistry. He justified the inclusion of chemistry, despite its greater emphasis compared to other subjects, by pointing out incoming freshmen's often inadequate science preparation. By incorporating fundamental concepts of physics and chemistry, the CFY program aims to elevate students' baseline scientific knowledge, address educational gaps, and foster a deeper interest in engineering disciplines. Concluding his remarks, Jim Conrad advocated for the CFY program's broader educational objectives. He emphasized the importance of gradually building upon students' knowledge base, arguing that a single course cannot cover all aspects of chemistry but can spark interest and lay the groundwork for further study. This approach, he argued, aligns with the goal of not only improving students' readiness for more advanced topics but also igniting their passion for engineering from the onset of their college education.

Afterward, CEFO President Jim Conrad took the speakership back.

- A faculty member inquired about the appearance and content of the voting form for the Common First Year (CFY) program decision. The response clarified that the form, not yet live, would straightforwardly request a vote on the CFY motion, mention the meeting's date, and provide a link to the motion's online documentation. Voters would choose between 'yes' or 'no,' with no option for additional comments.

## **6. Open the voting for Common First Year Motion**

Aidan Browne initiated the Qualtrics ballot for the CFY vote, ensuring all eligible faculty members were sent a ballot to cast their vote.

## **7. Closing**

The meeting concluded after all agenda items were addressed. The meeting adjourned at 12:27 PM.