



To: The School of Engineering Faculty Council
From: Jim Moore, Chair
Date: August 31, 2003
RE: 2002-03 Summary Academic Year Report to the Council

Please find attached the complete set of EFC documents from the past year. EFC Bylaw X.8 requires that "At the end of each Council's one-year term, the Chair of the Council will report to the entire faculty of the School, providing a comprehensive review of the activities of the Council during the year." This letter and the attached documents fulfill this obligation. Everything included here is currently available on the EFC website, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/engineering/efc/>. Please encourage our colleagues to visit the site if they want to review these materials.

The 2002-03 academic year was a busy one for the Engineering Faculty Council. Highlights of the past year include the following.

1. Relationship with the Dean's Office

The Dean has made clear efforts to use the EFC as a mechanism for faculty development, and to cultivate the active, intellectual support of the faculty for his administration and his objectives. The Dean met with the Council twice in 2003-03, once in October of 2002, and once in January of 2003. The January meeting focused on fundraising.

- The Dean's decision to meet with the EFC and provide an advance summary of the School's upcoming fundraising initiative, plans, and targets raised the quality of the dialog between the Dean's office and the School's faculty to a level that may not have been achieved anywhere else on campus.
- The Dean's willingness to provide future EFC Chairs with course release in exchange for service to the faculty and the Council communicates in the clearest terms his faith in and high expectations concerning the faculty.
- The Dean has continued to direct the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for Administration to attend the Council meetings and to exercise their prescribed roles as *ex-officio* members of the Council. As a result of this and additional, invited visits from the Senior Associate Dean for Research, the Associate Dean for Program Planning and Design, and others, the Dean's office has continued to play an active, very constructive role in the Council's discussions.
- The Dean has continued his policy of opening the standing schedule of meetings between his senior staff and the Department Chairs to the Chair of the Council (technically the Chair of the Faculty). He has

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continued to encourage the dissemination of materials and information circulated at these Chairs meetings back to the Council, subject to the constraint that Council members keep any confidential material in confidence. The Council has continued to observe this constraint.

- The Dean's office continued to provide staff support to execute the general election of the 2003-04 Council membership, and to turn to the Council members to initiate and support departmental elections.

2. Subcommittee Activities

The EFC empanelled a number of subcommittees during the 2002-03 academic year, and I am particularly grateful to those of members of the Council and the faculty at large who agreed to serve on these bodies. Collectively, these efforts accomplished a great deal on behalf of the School of Engineering and the faculty.

- Perhaps most important, the Engineering Faculty Council collaborated closely with the Dean to finalize School policies concerning faculty workloads and evaluation procedures. Circulated in the Spring of 2003, these changes provide faculty members and Chairs with importance guidance concerning faculty rights and responsibilities, and will diminish variance in faculty expectations and experiences across departments. These policies are a transparent link between merit raise decisions and faculty performance, providing faculty members with the means to configure their activities in a fashion the School is prepared to reward.
- The Council successfully revised its By-Laws, which were approved by an overwhelmingly positive vote of the School of Engineering Faculty on March 14, 2003. This is the first such update since the By-Laws were adopted in 1992.
- The Council provided the Dean with advice on space change procedures that addressed a number of concerns raised by individual faculty members.
- The Council provided the Dean with advice on Chair evaluation procedures, calling for the separation of evaluation activities and faculty votes on whether current Chairs should continue in their posts.
- The Council provided the Dean with tentative advice on appointment, evaluation, and responsibilities of research faculty.
- The Council actively cultivated a working relationship with University administrators and other faculty leaders, meeting with Executive Vice-Provost Michael Diamond, Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs Martin Levine, and President of the Academic Senate Philippa Levine (no relation).

All of the advice the Council offered to the Dean was the result of unanimous or nearly unanimous votes, with the notable exception of the Council's views on research faculty roles. This was the last item of business addressed during the 2002-03 academic year, and there were unresolved differences of opinion on the Council about the appropriate role of research faculty within the School. As a result, the vote on whether to forward the relevant subcommittee report to the Dean resulted in a tie, and I forwarded the report to the Dean as an information item. The 2003-04 Council may wish to revisit these questions.

3. Relationship with the Academic Senate

The Council and the Engineering faculty continues to enjoy considerable credibility within the Academic Senate. The Senate knows that the Engineering Faculty Council represents the faculty of the School, and has access to the Dean and the Dean's staff. We were less successful than I hoped persuading the Senate to support changes we think are in the best interests of the University and the School, but there are reasons to be optimistic about the Engineering faculty's future influence within the Academic Senate. The foundation for a good working partnership with the leadership of the Academic Senate is in place. In addition I was elected to the Senate Executive Board for the 2003-04 academic year, providing the School with expanded *de facto* voting representation within the Senate.

Three EFC resolutions went forward to the Senate Executive Board and were brought forward for votes in the Academic Senate.

- The Council resolved that the membership of Senate Executive Board should be subject to an at-large nomination and election procedure. The Senate did not concur.
- The Council resolved that faculty teaching evaluations should not be published by the University administration, either in electronic form or otherwise, unless the various Schools individually elect this course. The vote on asking the Provost to temporarily suspend operation of his website tied 12-12, with the Senate President Philippa Levine casting the deciding vote against the measure. The Senate did vote and to provide schools with the opportunity to opt out of the Provost's website based on a vote of their faculties or faculty councils, and to constitute a task force to examine the question in greater detail. The Senate also agreed that the link between the website at which the Provost publishes quantitative faculty teaching evaluations and the Student Senate website offering subjective evaluations should be severed, which it was.
- The Council resolved that the University should not institute enforced automatic deletion of faculty email files from the ISD email servers. The Senate did not concur, but did constitute a task force to examine the question in greater detail. The task force report is pending.

In addition to action on these resolutions, EFC Vice-Chair Michael Safonov served as a member of an *ad hoc* committee charged with examining the University's new policy addressing conflict of interest in research. The Senate voted to adopt this policy for one year in the spring of 2002, but the administration promulgated the policy as permanent. Faculty attempts to revise and improve the policy continue.

In summary, the Council has made a conscious effort to remain responsive to Dean Nikias during the course of his first two years as the leader the School, and the Dean has made a clear attempt to engage the EFC as fully as possible. However, in remaining responsive to the Dean, the EFC has necessarily been reactive. As we prepare for the 2003-2004 academic year, it will fall to this year's Council members to retain the high-quality working relationship that the Dean and Council have cultivated, while taking the initiative to identify and better inform the Dean with respect to new and emerging matters of specific importance to the faculty.

I thank all the members of the 2002-03 EFC for their exceptional efforts this past year. I won't try to identify your various individual subcommittee assignments here, because I think you all demonstrated a quick willingness to participate and contribute. As the attached documents attest, this EFC addressed a wide range complex and important questions. The questions we addressed often reached far beyond the School and into the Academic Senate and the University at large. I am particularly grateful to the EFC's officers during the past year, Professor of EE-Systems Michael Safonov and Professor (now Chair) of EE-Electrophysics John Choma. EE-Sytems Professors Mike Safonov and Bart Kosko and ISE Professor (now SAE Director) Stan Settles were irrepressible and irreplaceable in their elected roles in the Academic Senate.

I also thank all of the faculty members in the School for their many efforts working with the EFC. Effective faculty governance requires such active participation, despite our hectic schedules. It has been a genuine privilege for me to be able to work with my EFC colleagues and the rest of the faculty as Council Chair over these past two years, and I thank you for providing me with the opportunity.