

Minutes of ME Undergraduate Student Advisory Board Meeting March 31, 2006

Present: Dr. H.U. Akay (chair), Brandon Harville (co-chair), Kelly Moore, Nathan Wagers, and Braden Duffin.

Absent: Jakob Combs, Aaron Huesman, Daniel Langenderfer, Ibraheem Nezamuddin, Kurush Savabi, Diego Quevedo, David Langenderfer, Andrea Holland, Holly Brockman, Justin Wenger, Katie Borin, Kyle Ehmke, Tim Pommer, and Krista Cowan.

1. Dr. Akay welcomed the members.
2. The board reviewed the agenda.
3. The board reviewed the minutes from the meeting on March 3, 2006.
 - Brandon motioned to approve the minutes.
 - The board voted to approve the minutes.
4. Dr. Akay gave the Chair's Report, which consisted of the following points:
 - The results are in from the student surveys. The goal is 3.75. Some areas are up, and some areas are down.
 - Dr. Akay mentioned particular concern about the items, 'Overall professional experience' and 'Overall quality of ME education'. These items ratings are down from last semester.
 - Dr. Akay suggested having a student satisfaction survey for USAB members only.
 - The 500 level courses were discussed. There is some confusion among undergraduate students regarding the numbering system and content of the courses. Dr. Akay explained that the new system is the result of changes with bursar office's registration procedures. The 400 and 500 level classes are similar but requirements of undergraduate and graduate students will be differentiated.
5. Brandon Harville requested to go through the survey results and individually discuss each item.
 - Item 2: Quality of ME experimental labs. It was decided that all labs are going to Ben Snyder's method of lab reports. Lab instructors should be more vocal about any equipment that needs to be replaced.
 - Item 4: Quality of computing facilities for design and computational labs. It was suggested that there may be concern with the availability of computer resources. Dr. Akay mentioned that the opening of the new basement facilities in the ET building will improve the availability of computers.
 - Item 5: Quality of advising and help with POS. It was suggested that this could be improved by informing all students that visiting an advisor is optional. Also,

- students can visit any faculty member for advising. Dr. Akay mentioned that advising should not only include POS, but can also include career advice. It was suggested that advisors should have better access to students information to help with advising.
- Item 6: Scheduling of courses/classes. It was suggested that this could be improved by eliminating lengthy splits between labs and lectures. Dr. Akay reminded the board that this is ongoing, and there have been improvements over the last few semesters.
 - Item 8: Career planning assistance, job placement, and professional skills development. The e-mails sent by Dr. Akay to students regarding job placement were mentioned, and their effectiveness was discussed. It was mentioned that Josh Killey is doing a good job with the internship program. It was mentioned that it can be a little unsettling not having direct communication with employers.
 - Item 9: Opportunities for networking with fellow students and faculty through professional societies. Dr. Akay pointed out that society membership is down this year and stated that to be effective, societies need 'champions' to head the organizations. It was mentioned that funding can be hard to find. Kelly Moore suggested having an inter-campus design competition. Dr. Akay suggested that there may be too many societies for the student body size. Brandon Harville volunteered to talk with the different society leaders to get their opinions about possibly consolidating.
 - Item 10: Overall professional experience. Kelly Moore brought up the concern of classroom disruptions due to professors taking attendance. He suggested that disruptive, inattentive students hinder the learning of every student. Brandon mentioned that it seems some instructors show up unprepared to give a lecture. The online course evaluations were discussed.
 - Item 12: Quality of help from the department staff (secretary and technician). Students may not know who the technician is, and may have evaluated the secretary only.
 - Item 13: Quality of tutoring services offered by the department and Pi Tau Sigma. The attendance for tutoring has been very low. Braden Duffin mentioned that students are using other class-specific resources before using the general tutoring.
6. Brandon Harville presented his follow-up report from the last USAB meeting.
- The MURI application process was discussed. Dr. Akay talked with the MURI advising board about changing the application process to allow students to apply to more than one MURI project with a single application.
 - A suggestion was made to encourage Freshmen and Sophomores to study with each other. Organization and society membership was again discussed.
 - The USAB meeting attendance was discussed. It was suggested that attendance be made mandatory for a certain percentage of meetings. Brandon will scrutinize the membership bylaws and make recommendations for changes at the next board meeting.

- It was suggested that faculty be included on the board. Kelly Moore suggested that could change the dynamic and purpose of the board. Dr. Akay suggested that short invitations can be extended to faculty.
7. Nathan Wagers presented his report about the latest Meet the Masters event. Eleven people were in attendance. It was suggested that unseasonably pleasant weather may have been a factor in the low attendance. Also there were several other meetings of various organizations that were taking place at the same time. It was suggested that attendance be taken at the next event. Dr. Akay suggested that it might help to have the event earlier in the semester next time. Braden proposed having a department-wide calendar of events available online that could help with scheduling and coordination between events. The issue of updating the calendar was discussed. Dr. Akay suggested it would not be difficult to update the calendar within the ME office. Brandon Harville suggested appointing a USAB sub-committee to keep the calendar updated.
 8. Kelly Moore presented to the board his publicity efforts for both the Meet the Masters event and the availability of tutoring. His efforts included having e-mails sent to every freshman through the Freshmen Engineering Department, and personally speaking to all of the freshmen engineering classes. It was suggested that it may help to get flyers to the faculty in advance of the event or students visiting a class.
 9. Kelly Moore suggested having final exam study sessions where a graduate student is available to answer questions. The board agreed that this was a good idea. The format could include presenting several problems to students prior to the study session that would be discussed and worked out during the session. Dr. Akay recommended having a study session this year for ME274, and suggested Kelly Moore and Nathan Wagers coordinate the session in conjunction with Kurush Savabi.
 10. Kurush Savabi's report about the mentoring and tutoring program was given by Brandon Harville.
 - It was suggested that the mentoring program be made more formalized. Students can volunteer to be assigned a mentor. It is not possible to force students to be mentors, they must be volunteers. Dr. Akay suggested that mentors must also go through an application process. The USAB and PTS are good groups of prospective mentors. A dinner can be held to introduce mentors to students in an effort to 'break the ice'.
 - The tutoring program was discussed. It was suggested that there should be some type of guidelines for conduct in the tutoring room. The location of the room was discussed. Kurush recommended that Pi Tau Sigma champion the tutoring program, and use the USAB for help with staffing and support when needed. It was suggested that there should be some type of consequences for misconduct. The tutoring room should be staffed from 10am to 5pm Monday through Thursday. Tutors' areas of expertise should be kept track of in order to most efficiently schedule tutors. There could be a sign in log for students,

including the course that the student is seeking help for. It was mentioned that tutors should have keyed access to SL 009.

11. Brandon Harville suggested meeting again this semester. The by-laws were discussed again. Dr. Akay suggested voting on by-law changes at the next meeting. It was mentioned that the member list should be updated.
12. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 9:00am on Friday, September 8, 2006. Breakfast will be served.
13. Adjournment.

Prepared by: Braden Duffin and Hasan U. Akay.