

Engineering Students' Forum
Sponsored by the ASME student chapter
February 10, 2005 – Noon to 1 pm in ET 131

Present: Gerard Voland - Dean of the School of ETCS
Carlos Pomalaza-Ráez - Chair of the Department of Engineering
Fifteen engineering students

Moderator: Mark Moenssens, mechanical engineering student and ASME President

Summary

- Mark announced that students' organizations can expect to have space allocated to them in the planned buildings' expansion that will connect the Walb Memorial Union and the Library. This extra space might alleviate, to some degree, the lack of space the students' organizations currently endure.
- There is a proposal to have the chair of the department of engineering meet the officers of all the engineering student organizations at the start of the academic year. This meeting will increase the current level of communication between the department and these organizations. The goal is to help with the successful execution of the planned activities, e.g. membership drives, fund raising, invitation of speakers, plant tours, etc. The chair of the department of engineering fully agrees with this proposal and will arrange to meet with the officers of the students' organizations next fall. It has also been agreed to work on the possibility of having this type of meeting before the end of this academic year (which will not preclude the one to take place in the fall).
- Mark proposed, on behalf of the ASME chapter, to coordinate with the other chapters the establishment of an annual teaching award to be given to an engineering faculty member. The current ETCS Excellence in Teaching Award is given with zero input from the students, a grave anomaly that does not occur on other campuses. For the proposed award the students will have a substantial input which can be used in conjunction with input coming from other sources, such as a panel of faculty, to choose the winner. Details about the logistics and how the student organizations will coordinate the balloting process still need to be worked out. There are many models across the nation (engineering schools) that can be used as a starting point. The chair of the department of engineering fully endorses this proposal and will help as much as possible in its implementation and give this award the same prestige and status that such awards have at other engineering schools.
- The dean's office has been approached by officers of the Indiana-Purdue Student Government Association (IPSGA) to have the school of ETCS nominate a student for a seat in the Student Senate, the legislative branch of the IPSGA. Among other tasks this branch is responsible for the student service fee allocation and as such it is very important to have a motivated and dedicated student on that seat. The dean would like very much

to receive student's applications for this position. A one page description of the student's qualifications and why she/he wants to have this post is all that is needed.

- In the past the student organizations have generously provided help to the FIRST Lego League Robotics Competition that takes place at IPFW every December. IPFW is the Official Tournament site for the whole state of Indiana. There have been many requests for mentors that can help the teams of children as they prepare in the months leading up towards the tournament. In other states engineering students have performed very successfully this mentorship role. The ETCS Director of Outreach Activities, Carol Dostal, has asked if the student organizations here would like to have this mentorship activity as a component of their annual calendar. The proposal has been favorably received by the students and the details will be worked out through Carol's office. The chair of the department thanked the students for their past and future involvement in this event which has grown a lot since its inception in 2000 when he and Professor Groff brought the tournament to Indiana.
- A topic from the last forum was discussed again, the one of lack of high tech equipment and experiments in the mechanical engineering curriculum. Students would like to see more use of computer data acquisition systems and the availability of computers in the labs so they can perform on-site data analysis and calibration. Currently there is only one mobile data acquisition system that is rarely used in some of the laboratory courses. The chair of the department stated that this concern has been brought to the attention of the mechanical engineering curriculum committee and the ME faculty and that some steps are already being taken to upgrade the laboratories. The chair added that just buying equipment and installing computers is not a solution. Faculty have to assess how the development and implementation of experiments, which make use of such equipment, meets the goals of the program before such equipment upgrades and experiment updates can take place.
- The chair of the department brought forward a proposal to have an end-of-the year barbecue party on campus by the St. Joe River. This will give an opportunity for interaction between faculty, staff, and students outside the classroom, office, and building. A kayak race on the river is a possible event during the party. More details and a date can be arranged during the remainder of the semester. Students have, in principle, agreed to have this party.
- Mark asked about open labs for next academic year. The dean of the school is planning to have one or two truly open labs for students' use. There will be no lectures or demonstrations scheduled in these labs.
- The dean requested that students coordinate with his office when planning to make fund raising visits to local industry for activities such as the Mini Baja. He would like to know about such activities taking place for when his office contacts the same companies on a broader range of issues.