Report of the CEAS Blue Ribbon Committee on AS3E

Committee Members: Jeff Forbes (chair), Penny Axelrad, Jeff Thayer, Brian Argrow

Current Status

AS3E is a campus-wide initiative led by the Aerospace Department. It was approved by Chancellor Peterson, Acting Provost DeStefano, and Acting VCR Stein Sture in November 2008, and although it remains the program plan for the Aerospace and Energy Systems Building (AESB), the committee recommends (see below) that portions of the plan should be implemented now, regardless of the status of AESB. Progress has been slow because the requested faculty positions have not yet materialized, and the AESB (which was originally to be completed by August 2012) has still not been approved for construction. A progress report (attached) was presented to the Provost in March, 2011. In a subsequent meeting with J.Forbes, Provost Moore indicated that some AS3E faculty positions could start becoming available in AY2013-2014.

Future Steps

(1) AES Chair Penny Axelrad meets with Provost to re-affirm campus commitment to AS3E; to discuss its scope and organization; to establish the campus's plan for making available new faculty positions and start-up costs; and to discuss the TYPES of faculty positions (i.e., regular vs. grad school) to be made available.

(2) Investigate potential degree of engagement of CEAS departments (e.g., ECEE, CS, ME) in AS3E, and explore possible creation of "matching lines" from the CEAS Dean, following the example of the Energy Initiative (RASEI). One possible theme would center around robotics, and related applications to environmental, space and planetary problems.

(3) Develop a plan for the first AS3E cluster faculty search, possibly in the general area of small satellites.

(4) Explore options for a new Aerospace Building and facilities, either on the main campus or on east campus.

(5) Develop an implementation plan to move AS3E forward now, in parallel with pursuing a new building. One example would be to establish a Graduate Project hosted and funded by AES and joint with ATOC, LASP or APS, that demonstrates "in miniature" how AS3E could work. Also, pursue current interest on campus for submitting an ERC or STC proposal in an AS3E area.

(6) Lobby support from aerospace industry and State of Colorado for the university to move forward on AS3E and the new building.