SUMMARY OF THE CU-BOULDER ENGINEERING ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING - 10/22/2012

Brief Items:
1. New Faculty Orientation – Carin Knickel and Diane Sieber announced that a shorter (two half-days) orientation for new faculty will be held next year, and the requirement to attend will be included in the offer letters.
2. Staff Development Workshops – Carin Knickel and Lynn Melms noted that staff-development workshops on various topics will be held about once per month.
3. Engineering Advisory Council – Rob Davis thanked the chairs for attending, which was very much appreciated by the EAC members. He also noted that Jim Martin did a very good job in presenting an overview of the CS department.
4. Reminder that the deadline for college faculty and staff awards nominations is Nov 2 – JoAnn Zelasko encouraged the chairs to nominate outstanding faculty and staff for these awards.

Blue Ribbon Report on Staff Evaluations – Lynn Melms summarized the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on staff evaluations, including the formation of an evaluation oversight committee to provide cross-calibration of staff performance evaluations, a modified evaluation form for professional-exempt staff (including goals for current cycle, performance against those goals, and draft goals for upcoming cycle), provision for self-assessment as well as feedback from others, a timeline for the process, training of staff and supervisors on the process, and transparent communication of allocation of the raise pool. Discussion included whether meetings between supervisors and employees should take place before or after the evaluation ratings were set, a recommendation that an overall rating should be provided but not ones for individual categories, and discussion of whether or not there should be published ranges of raise percentages for the various ratings levels.

Blue Ribbon Report on Student Retention - Diane Sieber reported on the Blue Ribbon Committee on Student Retention. Key recommendations include:
1. Pilot a new Residential Academic Program (Good news: A Global Engineering RAP, led by Diane, has now been approved).
2. Provide college faculty and instructors with appropriate findings from engineering education and retention research, including strategies from the NSF-funded ENGAGE program.
3. Do a deeper assessment of student retention in our college, including cost/benefit of the first-year projects course.
4. Improve advising for students in transition.
5. Provide reward structure to departments and faculty for retention practices.
6. Consider a program of industry mentors.

Discussion included how to define departmental versus college-wide retention (a possible solution is to start with the sophomore year for departmental retention, since there is large mobility between majors in the freshman year), how to encourage retention practices without inflating grades, and how to separate cause from correlation in retention findings. The need for more advisors was also noted. Jackie Sullivan noted that industry mentoring programs for undergraduates can be very expensive, with a low return on investment.

Blue Ribbon Report on New Programs – Diane also gave a report on the Blue Ribbon Committee on New Degree Programs. The Engineering for Society (EfS) proposal is highly recommended. Other recommended possibilities include Interdisciplinary Design, Industrial Engineering, Information Science, Biomedical Engineering, and Technology Arts and Media – each with pros and cons. The need to rethink
the funding model for interdisciplinary programs was noted, as well as a desire for vertical integration of new undergraduate and graduate programs. Jackie then gave an update on EfS, which is being recast in response to feedback as a General Engineering Plus (GenEng+) degree of 128 credits for the degree, plus additional credits for the strand leading to a teaching license in math or science. The concept is still built on a discipline specialty or emphasis, including capstone design. Other strands are recommended for the future, such as a pre-med option and international engineering. The “purposeful electives” support the chosen strand or focus area. It was recommended that advising come from the home department of the student’s discipline emphasis. The funding model will need to consider the impact on department resources.