Summary and Recommendations of 4/25/2014 Meeting of the CU-Boulder Engineering Advisory Council

This report provides a summary of the 4/25/2014 meeting of the CU-Boulder Engineering Advisory Council (EAC), with key recommendations provided at the end in italics. This report, the presentation slides, and other relevant materials are archived at http://www.colorado.edu/engineering/about/engineering-advisory-council.

Engineering 2020: Vision for Excellence: Dean Robert H. Davis reported that the revised strategic plan has been published and distributed to various constituents. The overarching goals of doubled enrollments and top-20 rankings were embraced by the EAC.

Incoming Class of 2014: Sarah Miller was introduced as our new Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence. She made an entertaining presentation of the cultural experience of the incoming freshmen, as well as some preliminary statistics on class size and demographics – it appears that the entering class for Fall 2014 will set new records for size and quality measures, but be just short of records for percentages of women and underrepresented minorities.

Department Advisory Boards: Assistant Dean Doug Smith presented a brief overview of the status and foci of the advisory boards for the departments and programs in our college. Most of them are highly active, though a few are in the process of being reactivated. A relatively new focus of these boards is on philanthropy, with good success in some cases.

Graduate Programs: Associate Deans Kurt Maute and Diane Sieber presented a summary of graduate programs, including enrollment growth (35% in the past five years), relative sizes of master’s and doctoral programs and associate research metrics. The presentation was followed by small-group discussions between EAC members and current graduate students and then a panel discussion in which several EAC members (Dana Andersen, Jeff Richardson, Ashok Srivastava, Kathy Tobey) described industry needs for engineers and computer scientists with graduate degrees. In brief, there are strong needs for both M.S. and Ph.D. graduates with technical skills, team-based experience, and “strategic acumen”.

Campus Support: During lunch, Provost Russ Moore affirmed the support of the CU-Boulder campus leadership for the goals in the refreshed strategic plan, Engineering 2020: Vision for Excellence. He noted that this plan fits well with campus priorities, especially the enhancement of the reputation of our institution.
Recognition of Members: Dean Davis recognized and thanked seven EAC members whose terms are ending 6/30/2014: Paul Hamilton, Nan Joesten, Joe Negler, Lanny Pinchuk, Frank Prager, Al Sanders and Kristy Schloss. He also welcomed two new members: Jo Anne Miller and Ali Siahpush. Also, Dereje Agonafer, Lanny Pinchuk, Ashok Srivastava, and Mike Wirth were recognized for recent awards, while Kathy Tobey and Lisa Glatch were congratulated for new executive appointments. Frank Doerner, Jim Gallogly and Mike Wirth were thanked for having made recent presentations to students at CU.

ECEE Department: Mike Lightner, Chair of Electrical, Computer, and Energy Engineering, gave an overview of his department, including areas of research strength. Jelena Notaros, an ECEE student, described her undergraduate research project. It was recommended that students be used in marketing the department, and that our faculty visit other universities to improve our reputation.

Be Boulder Branding: Courtney Staufer and Jon Leslie gave an update on the Be Boulder branding campaign, noting that our college is taking a lead role in using the new messaging platforms. Feedback on example messages was provided by EAC members using “clicker” votes.

Development Report: Jessica Wright and Doug Smith gave a development update. EAC members have been a huge help: in total, current EAC members have provided over $7 million in gifts to CU, and their companies have provided over $13 million. Our team, which serves both BioFrontiers and Engineering, has raised over $12 million in the first 10 months of this fiscal year, exceeding last year’s total. The Dean’s Club is also up, with a record 139 members, and the Dean’s Fund has topped $500,000 this year for the first time.

Education Update: Associate Dean Diane Sieber gave an update on educational activities. The Idea Forge is under construction in the old Fleming Law Library and will open this coming fall. The successful certificate and minor in Technology, Arts and Media (TAM) are under consideration for expansion to a B.S. degree in TAM, offered by the ATLAS Institute. The Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) have undergone program review during this past year, and the RAPs overseen by our college received positive reviews as model programs.

Recommendations: The EAC members held a closed session for members only, and then provided the following summary recommendations:

1. **Strategic Plan**
   - *Well done, aspirational, presents a serious challenge*
• It will be a challenge to achieve growth whilst maintaining quality and diversity; continue to improve the admissions process and STEM pipeline
• Drive change down through the departments, so that they own the plan and execute it
• Good news that the dean has modeled tuition revenue associated with growth projections to meet new faculty demands; EAC would like to see the detailed projections of campus funding to support the plan
• EAC would like to see a projection of development funds required to meet expectations of the plan
• EAC recommends that we build on the strengths of our best departments and programs, and not over-invest in the underperforming ones

2. Departments and Advisory Boards
• EAC would like to understand how department chairs are selected, at CU and elsewhere, and how they will buy into the strategic plan and call for leadership
• EAC would like to learn more about department governance, and for department advisory boards to have similar functions that are in alignment with the EAC

3. Branding and Rank
• Very positive feedback on the brand campaign; highly commendable work
• Need to be sure to tailor messages to our audiences
• Messages need to ‘emote not educate’
• If the NRC ranking will no longer be available, we need to determine what ranking will be used (e.g., Academic Analytics or others)
• We need to develop a clear understanding of what it will take to become ranked in the top 20 and take specific actions to get there

Wrap up: The next meeting will include a visit to the Idea Forge and discussion of departmental participation in the strategic plan. Dean Davis then reminded members that the next EAC meetings are scheduled for 10/24/2014 and 4/24/2015.