

Senators,

On the action agenda at the next Faculty Senate meeting is a proposal to form a new department of Engineering Education in the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering.

There was some discussion about this proposal at the last meeting, and I wanted to clarify a few things:

- 1) This proposal was initiated by faculty and is not driven by administration. It is an effort by faculty currently in an institute who want to form a department in order to grow, include tenure-track faculty, and expand research. I myself as the institute director am a 9-month faculty member with a teaching and research assignment like many of you.
- 2) There was an accusation that we did not follow procedures in the approval process of this proposal, but it was made clear by General Counsel and the Provost's Office that procedure was followed. A college-wide faculty vote was not taken, and is not required. In recent history, Engineering has merged departments and created a new department, and no college-wide vote was taken then. A number of recent proposals from other colleges also did not include votes of the full college faculty, including the departments of: Linguistics (5/6/10 Faculty Senate); Dermatology (11/20/08 Faculty Senate); Urology (2/17/05 Faculty Senate); and Aging & Geriatric Research (12/16/04 Faculty Senate).
- 3) Input from a broad selection of faculty for proposals like this is crucial, which is why I presented this proposal to the Engineering Faculty Council, and at all department faculty meetings in engineering. This has resulted in discussions – mostly about the upcoming proposal for a PhD degree, which is not part of this proposal. These discussions have led to the creation of a set of joint tenured faculty to help the new department with tenure and programmatic decisions; you can find a list in the proposal. This is shared governance in action.
- 4) The proposal was unanimously approved by the affected faculty in the institute, unanimously approved by the college curriculum committee, unanimously approved by the University Curriculum Committee and unanimously approved by the Graduate Council. Again, opportunities for faculty to have input.
- 5) Holding up a proposal because some faculty do not like the current procedure would not be fair and there are processes in place to change procedures for future proposals.

I would love to hear discussions about the merits of the proposal, and I hope you will come to the last senate meeting of the academic year.

Hans van Oostrom, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Institute Director