

School of Engineering Curriculum Committee Minutes  
Thursday November 3, 2011.

Present:

Alva Couch (COMP, Chair)  
Sergio Fantini (Guest and proposer, BME)  
Christopher Ghadban (BSCHE student)  
Edward Kutsoati (Economics)  
Fio Omenetto (BME)  
Dan Ryder (ChBE)  
Anil Saigal (ME)  
Chris Swan (CEE)  
Lewis Edgers (dean's office, ex officio)

The School of Engineering Curriculum Committee met on Thursday November 3, from 9:30-10:20 am in Anderson 208. The minutes from October 14, 2011 were accepted with 4 in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

The chair next reported the results of voting of the full faculty on Oct 26, 2011:

1. The motion to eliminate pass/fail in introductory sciences was passed unanimously.
2. The motion to eliminate departmental suffixes from EN courses was passed unanimously.
3. The motion to update BME admission requirements was tabled by the Faculty of Engineering and sent back to committee.

The remainder of the meeting was a detailed discussion of the tabled BME admission requirements. In the SOE faculty meeting, faculty were concerned that:

1. One has to enroll in EN64 in order to even be considered for the major.
2. Thus BME must be prepared to offer EN64 to all interested freshmen.
3. This could well become a majority of the freshman class.

In this discussion, several more concerns were presented. The proposed requirements:

1. Prescribe all of the courses to be taken in first term of freshman year for all applicants, even if the applicant has AP credit in the sciences.
2. Require the applicant to take Chemistry 2 even if the applicant has been awarded AP credit for it, by a score of 5 on the AP exam, thus nullifying the benefit of one of two Chemistry AP credits that the registrar awards for an AP score of five. According to university policy, AP credit for a course that is taken and passed is no longer applied.
3. Set a precedent for other departments to follow, including – e.g. – Chemical and Biological Engineering and Computer Science, both of whose programs are limited by the prescribed common core curriculum for freshman year.
4. Violate the spirit – if not the letter – of the common core requirements for freshmen in Engineering.

In response, BME representatives reported that:

1. When polled about their interests, 80-100 entering freshmen expressed interest in the BME major this year.

2. The BME department is prepared to handle that predicted load in EN64.
3. The first term of freshman year was already prescribed in the existing BME bulletin description.
4. EN64 covers material that was previously in BME50.
5. It is inconvenient – but not impossible – for that material to be covered in BME50 in sophomore year instead.

After much discussion, the committee informally agreed that:

1. Making EN64 an option rather than a requirement would address the issue of prescribing more than necessary of the freshman curriculum.
2. The description should clarify the role of AP credit.

The committee is willing to review a revised proposal that addresses these issues via email next week, with a potential electronic vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Alva L. Couch  
Chair, SOECC