Engineering Research Committee - College of Engineering
Report for the 2012-2013 Academic Year

Members: A. Benard (ME, Chair), S. Biswas (ECE), C. Chan (CHEMS), R. Jin (CSE), Liu, Y. (AgE), A. Paknati (student rep.), R. Schmidt (student rep.), P. Manta (ECE), L. Kempel (ex officio), Chatti, K. (Associate Dean), P. Wade (ex officio).

The committee met eight times during Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters. The following issues related to College research activities were addressed by the committee.

Withrow Awards

Nominations for the Junior and Senior Scholar Awards were reviews and ranked by the committee members. Recommendations by the committee were forwarded to the Dean’s office.

College Rankings

The committee continued to discuss strategies of improving the college ranking. Andre Benard provided his analysis on college rankings, and identified the important factors (e.g. total expenditure, number of graduated PhD students) in determining college ranking. The committee analyzed the expenditure data and graduate student data collected by Peggy Wade. Several strategies were discussed for improving college ranking, including (a) supports and incentives for faculty to go after large grants, (b) mechanism to recruit and graduate more PhD students.

Improving Research Quality

The committee discussed the strategies of improving the research quality of the college. The concern was raised under observation that some PhD students graduated with little or no formal publications. The committee discussed the possibility of imposing a minimum publication requirement for PhD students, and mechanism for implementing such a policy. The committee analyzed the publication data of 2013 collected by Katy Luchini Colbry. Rong Jin also solicited the feedback from faculty members of CSE on the publication policy. Overall, the committee did not reach the agreement on the publication policy. Arguments against a publication policy stated that most PhD students graduate with acceptable number of publications and that it is an unwanted policy by faculty. Committee members supporting such a policy stated that it should not be problem to implement such policy in view of the data.

Respectfully submitted, R. Jin