

EP Student Advisory Committee F17 Report

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Executive Committee Members for Fall 2017

Alex Swenson (NEEP grad, co-chair)	Kalin Kiesling (NEEP grad, co-chair)	Brian Cornille (NEEP grad)	Aashrith Sarawathibhalta (EM grad)
Michael Moorehead (NEEP grad)	Kyle Anderson (NE undergrad)	Emily Jewell (EM undergrad)	Aidan Combs (EP undergrad)
Marissa Brown (NE undergrad)	John Masse (NE undergrad)	David Zeugner (EM undergrad)	

Committee Purpose

The purpose of the Student Advisory Committee is to improve the academic community for students of the Department of Engineering Physics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Committee seeks to formalize strong connections between students and the faculty and staff. These goals further outline the mission of the Committee:

- Foster a stronger sense of community between the students and the Department
- Establish a unified student voice to bring suggestions and concerns to the Department on a consistent basis
- Provide students the opportunity to engage with the Department in a meaningful capacity outside the classroom
- Encourage student cooperation across academic programs within the Department to improve the community as a whole
- Provide support to new students entering the Department

Introduction

The inaugural semester of the Engineering Physics Student Advisory Committee was largely successful and saw most goals of the committee accomplished. The main focus of the semester was to officially form the Committee and to establish a formal framework for student-faculty interaction in the Department of Engineering Physics. The Student Advisory Committee (by design) includes every student in a degree program in the Engineering Physics Department. The Executive Committee leads the Student Advisory Committee and is the interface between the students and faculty in the Department. While the initial Committee goals have been achieved, much work remains. Student attendance at forums is low which is detrimental to the committee's ability to provide the department with effective feedback from

students. However, it was recognized that attendance would be initially low until the Committee is more openly recognized by the students of the Department. The Executive Committee continues to work to disseminate information about the existence of the Committee to slowly build participation. The Executive Committee is also in active search of more EM members, specifically undergraduate students to help expand the diversity of the committee. The following is a summary of the activities of the Student Advisory Committee during the Fall 2017 academic semester.

Semester Activities and Achievements

Committee Formation

With the help of the Department at the beginning of the Fall semester, the committee was officially formed in the Department. Members of the Executive Committee were invited to join based on the recommendation of faculty in the Department. Part of this Committee formation was the creation of a website (studentadvisory.engr.wisc.edu) to host material and information for students, faculty, and staff, and an email account (studentadvisory@ep.wisc.edu) for official Student Advisory Committee Business. In addition, the Co-Chairs, with the help of Tim Jensen and John Paul Bertinet in the EP Department, drafted a set of bylaws for the Committee. The bylaws have not yet been officially adopted by the Committee as it was decided that they should be revisited and amended after the first year was completed. The drafted bylaws are available on the website and will be revised at the end of Spring 2018.

Student Forums

Bi-weekly lunch-time student forums were held to collect student comments about the Department. All students in the Department were encouraged to share their thoughts on the Department in a confidential student-only environment. For each forum, there were generally 1-3 students in attendance, all of which amounted to productive conversation.

Student Survey

The Committee issued a survey to all EP students in October. Topics included advising, research participation, communication, classroom experience, general department experience, and harassment/grievances. The results of the survey were shared with the Department Chair. The results of the survey indicated to the Executive Committee the most pressing issues to address.

Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee met once each month to discuss progress on current issues and to plan future events (student forums, surveys, etc.). The Executive Committee Co-Chairs also reported important information arising from the faculty meetings and meetings with the Department Chair to the rest of the Executive Committee at these meetings.

Meeting With Department Chair

The Executive Committee Co-Chairs met with the Department Chair to discuss the Committee's progress and questions and concerns students had regarding the Department and College of Engineering. The meeting was useful to gain fine-grain insight into Department issues from the perspective of the Chair. The Co-Chairs are expected to meet with the Chair at least once a semester. The frequency may be increased if deemed necessary.

Faculty Meeting Attendance

The Co-Chairs attended every Faculty Meeting during the Fall Semester. On numerous occasions they reported on various Student Advisory Committee activities relevant to the faculty and allowed the faculty the opportunity to ask questions. They also reported meeting minutes back to the members of the Executive Committee. As a result of attending these meetings, students have been more aware what is happening in the Department and the Department has been more actively asking for student input on various matters.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

Fall 2017 was successful at launching the Student Advisory Committee and beginning to tackle important Department issues. The Committee looks forward to continuing work in the Spring 2018 semester. The Committee plans to prepare for the Industry Liaison Committee meetings set to happen in Fall 2018, as well as helping with new student welcome events in the upcoming Fall semester.