

**ME Open Forum  
WebEx Meeting  
October 15, 2020, noon to 1:00 pm**

**Minutes**

Attending:

Aaron Morris	Eckhard Groll	Jong Hyun Choi	Nina
Adrian Buganza-Tepole	Emma Cox	Julia King	Mahmoudian
Ajay Malshe	Euiwon Bae	Justin Weibel	Orkan Kurtulas
Alex Choros	Fabio Semperlotti	Kai Ming Li	Partha Mukherjee
Amy Marconnet	Fashid Sadeghi	Kay Shepherd	Richard Buckius
Andres Arrieta	Fu Zhao	Kejie Zhao	Sadegh Dabiri
Arezoo Ardekani	Galen King	Klod Kokini	Salil Bapat
Bert	Gordon Pennock	Kristi Moses	Sameer Naik
Gramelspacher	Greg Jensen	Laura	Scott Banfield
Beth Hess	Greg Shaver	Blumenschein	Sheri Tague
Bin Yao	Guillermo	Liang Pan	Sheryl Willison
Bob Lucht	Paniagua	Maralee	Song Zhang
Cathy Elwell	Ilias Bilonis	Hayworth	Steve Son
Chris Goldenstein	Ivan Christov	Marcial Gonzalez	Steve Wereley
Chuck Krousgrill	Jackie Baumgardt	Marisol Koslowski	Stuart Bolton
David Warsinger	Jay Gore	Martha Lucht	Tami Armstrong
Davide Ziviani	Jeremy Wampler	Neera Jain	Terry Meyer
Davin Piercey	Jim Braun	Nicole Key	Thomas Siegmund
	Jitesh Panchal		Xiaomin Qian

**1. Share a value, make a point – Eckhard**

- Mentioned Jay and Arezoo accomplishments listed in the announcements.
- Eckhard talked about the PhD exit interviews with graduating PhD students. He expressed gratitude to all faculty advisors that have graduated PhD students. The advisors have done a tremendous job in chaperoning the students to a successful completion. He applauded all the advisors.

**2. Announcements – Eckhard**

- Jay Gore: invited by the Director of The Energy Research Institute Policy Centre (TERI Policy Centre) to be a Global Advisor for their Smart Campus Network.
- Arezoo Ardekani: elected as a member-at-large of the Executive Committee for the American Physical Society Division of Fluid Dynamics.

**3. Starting Two Faculty Searches – Eckhard**

- Eckhard mentioned that the CoE has agreed to provide resources to hire two new faculty members, and informed ME to start two faculty searches. The faculty search committees are made up as follows.
  - Search Committee for “Senior faculty position in Heat Transfer”:
    - Chair: Xiulin Ruan
    - Members:
    - Luciano Castillo
    - Bumsoo Han
    - Neera Jain
    - Amy Marconnet
    - Liang Pan
    - Administrative support: Kay Shepherd
  - Search Committee for “Junior faculty position in Innovation & Making”:
    - Chair: Ajay Malshe
    - Members:
    - James Gibert
    - Marcial Gonzalez
    - Nina Mahmoudian
    - Farshid Sadeghi
    - John Sutherland
    - Administrative support: Martha Lucht
- ME currently has the opportunity to hire more faculty through the Movable Dream Hires process. A potential candidate has been identified
  - Eckhard will start an evaluation committee.
    - The committee will evaluate one candidate only.
  - Eckhard requested to let him know if there is a case to be made to hire someone else through this process.

#### 4. Anonymous Feedback Website is Now Fully Functional – Eckhard

- <https://engineering.purdue.edu/ME/AboutUs/contact.html>
  - Eckhard provided general information about the feedback website, and informed that the feedback is completely anonymous. He will receive a summary of all the entries made in the last 24 hours every morning at 8:00 am. Goal is to report any situation that is uncomfortable, that could be challenging, and that is definitely not right. In particular, this allows reporting when a person is in a difficult situation and may have fear for repercussions when reporting it.
  - This feedback website is open to students, faculty and staff.
  - Eckhard will investigate and take the appropriate action, or refer the issue to appropriate people at Purdue.

#### 5. Update on Graduate Program – Nicole

- Area Exams:

- The Graduate Office has been receiving results of the area exams
  - They had been sending out letters as results are available
  - Waiting for one area to complete this process for the semester
- H1 and J1 Visas news
  - Purdue has joined other Universities in a lawsuit trying to fight the proposed changes
- Recruiting from the minority visitation coming up at the end of the month
  - Nicole is thanking faculty for participating and taking an active role in recruiting.
  - Expect several applications this year.

**Comments:**

**Neera:** Has there been communication with the international graduate students to inform them where Purdue stands regarding the proposed visa changes? Communication should be as a community instead to the specific group that is being affected.

**Nicole:** *Believes Neera has a good point that domestic students should worry about their peers and they need to be informed.*

- *Students get a lot of communications from the ISS and from the graduate school. In particular, Linda Mason sends out a lot of e-mails, and the CoE sends a lot of emails too. So, the Graduate Office is careful not to bombard them with more. Nicole does not want to add more stress to their lives. And she doesn't know how well publicized it is. She is not sure if the students are already aware of the communication from IISS. Nicole states that we need to find that right balance where we communicate support, but we don't create extra burden of worry on top of the students.*
- *Some students have issued concerns about not being sure this is the place to be at right now due to the race relations, and political climate stance on immigration. Nicole is worried that we are moving into an era where students are not going to choose the US.*
- *The Graduate Office is going to schedule another Graduate Student Open Forum to show support to all the students.*
- *Nicole will reach out to OMEGA and get their advice on what kind of event would be helpful, and how should we engage the broader community, not just the international students.*
- *Nicole will talk to the ME Graduate Office staff and ask for their ideas.*
- *Nicole will reach out to the CoE to see what kind of communication related to this topic has been going out and see what can we do to reach out to our students.*

**Stuart:** What is the lawsuit that Purdue is joining?

**Nicole:** *It is to fight the two year/four-year limits that they are proposing for H1, and J 1 visas.*

**Eckhard:** There is another aspect that is related to minimum starting salaries of H1B postdocs and faculty. It is a class action lawsuit that Purdue joined with other Universities, and also with industry corporations. We were asked not to send any details yet to the community as a whole. There will be communication coming forward probably with input from the Purdue legal team. The Dean will send it out. There is a fine line on how it is going to be implemented so we need to hold on this until we receive official communication.

**Greg:** This particular issue is one that stressing our students. There's a lot of other things that are stressing all of us. Some students are experiencing the following: Feeling unwelcome here, having trouble building a community because they are in a minority situation, feeling uncomfortable because of COVID-19, feeling uneasy because we are not handling the disease as well as other places that are familiar to them, dealing with messages that they are not welcome, encountering social issues with law enforcement, having issues with law enforcement due to their race (fear to do things that white people are allowed to do), we need for those people who have additional struggles to allow us to understand them so we can help them better. To build a community and understanding, a student who is not worried about getting arrested or shot by the police needs to understand that their colleague might actually worry about this. I think that is part of what Neera was saying.

**Neera:** She had a student who just graduated after finishing his PhD. He's a white male student who grew up in a small town in Indiana. This student observed how Neera was trying to recruit a graduate student from Pakistan and made him an RA offer. The student went back to Pakistan to get his visa renewed and it got denied. He is now in the UK as a graduate student. When this happened and Neera shared with her group, the Indiana student stated that it opened his eyes to international issues and that he had never really thought about the implications that it has on our international students. Neera stated that the only way to build empathy and understanding with others is by learning about their experiences. She completely understands Nicole and Eckhard about the sensitivity around US legal issues and agrees that we should not be sending out emails that are creating panic or etc. However, Neera stated that there needs to be ways to project more of a sense of community.

**Nicole:** Agrees that Neera makes a great point that we should have these discussions with our research groups. She thinks that if we send blast e-mails from the top, they may or may not be read based on her experience on how other blast emails are treated with important information about qualifying exams and things like that. When we have these open conversations in the research group, maybe we can reach everybody.

**Jay:** What we do as advisors within our research groups becomes very important. Our support is the best and closest support that the students can get in our group and we can establish empathy and support from US students for international students and amongst international students themselves. Jay also shared great news about one of the Purdue doctoral fellows who received an invitation to be a mentee of one of the managers at Sandia National Laboratory for one year before they consider him for a laboratory scientist position. He was one of our Purdue doctoral fellows, who happens to be a minority student that we recruited with our activities in the Graduate Office.

**Greg:** We should be doing all these things. It is hard to have these discussions, but if anybody is feeling uncomfortable, they should reach out to another colleague, Nicole, Eckhard or Jim so they can provide some guidance on how to approach the situation. We need to help each other. Greg thinks maybe we should focus on the students that are suffering the most, and those who are not suffering as much can help. More awareness is needed among students, faculty and staff.

**Eckhard:** Would like to see if there is an opportunity for the School to maybe create a website for students where they can share issues relating to immigration law changes, and the COVID situation. It may be good to have a website that we can expand to other issues that come up in

the future.

*Action item: Eckhard and Ajay will start the process of setting up a website for students to share stories of things that are not going well, similar to the “Black at Purdue” website.*

**Ajay:** We should have a dedicated one-hour dialogue where faculty can openly share their experiences. He thinks that generating their awareness, which could lead to actions could be meaningful. He asked about making a request to have a forum just dedicated to nothing but to be open to share, nothing would be recorded. This experience would be very helpful for the awareness and impact

**Eckhard:** Thinks that is a good idea and he is happy that Ajay brought this up.

*Action item: We will designate one of the next ME Open Forums for faculty to share personal experiences in ME.*

**Greg:** The College of Engineering just created a website that they took live a couple weeks ago. There's quite a bit of information there too.

## 6. Update on Undergraduate Program – Jim Jones

- There is a proposal with the EPC right now for extending the withdrawal/drop date to December 4<sup>th</sup>. Jim thinks it is likely to be approved.
- There was a second proposal to offer the pass/no pass option again to students for courses in taken during this fall semester. Jim is not sure that this one has a lot of support. This would allow students to do the pass /no pass up through December 4th.
- Starting this next academic year, the College of Engineering is going to reinstate our past transition to major admissions policy. The only guarantees would be for students who earn a 3.2 GPA on the FYE core requirements, and a 3.0 cumulative GPA, which includes courses that are beyond the freshmen core requirements.
  - This will allow the School to go back to previous operating procedure and keep admissions to a level that we can more easily handle.
- One trend noticed this fall is that a lot of students signed up for face-to-face courses, but are not attending. Some students are missing class for appropriate reasons but some are just not attending.
- The university conducted mid semester instructor evaluations. Hopefully, everyone saw the emails and encouraged their students to participate. This is a way for us to get some mid semester feedback so we can make appropriate corrections moving forward. Jim told the faculty to particularly encourage students to answer the last question. The evaluations are all qualitative based on student comments. There's no quantitative part to it at all. The last question is the student's recommendations for course improvements.
  - This allows instructors to find out if there are any adjustments needed. If the majority of students is saying that this semester is more work, we want to keep that in mind and see if we need to make some adjustments to help students maintain their sanity and be able to handle this semester.
  - Jim would be interested, if anybody would like to share, how the mid semester evaluation turned out for them?
  - In Junior level courses, where the lecture has been shared between faculty, students are concerned about the change in style from one faculty to another and have

stated that it has been difficult for them to adapt. Jim would be interested in hearing what kind of feedback everyone is hearing from students or anything else that would be helpful for Eckhard and him to be aware of.

**Comments:**

**Greg:** Some freshmen students have stated that there's a lot of cheating going on during the exams in math. When they get to our program, they're not going to be as prepared as other students and they may have also developed some bad habits.

**Jim:** Doesn't know about math. However, conducting the exam during a 24-hour time window makes it fairly easy to cheat and even good-hearted students, who want to do the right thing, get drawn in, because they see all their peers cheating, and they feel like they have to as well in order to compete since the grading in math is based on percentages.

**Bob:** A 24-hour exam is way too long. You can get responses from Chegg in about 20 to 30 minutes.

**Greg:** We may need to question what students are really learning before they come to our program. We may have to make some adjustments on our end on how we get people ramped up. We may need to work even harder than what we do today. And we need to work very hard to discourage cheating, but if students are learning that as a skill in their first year here on campus, we have got to break that.

**Jim:** Thinks the good thing is that a lot of our faculty have adopted the idea of doing two exams, synchronous, as opposed to trying to have a lengthy period of time. Jim mentioned that they have been working with Chegg. They have developed a proctoring tool in a beta version. If we send our exam to them a couple days ahead of time, this tool will not allow any of our exam problems and corresponding solutions to be posted. If someone did request it during that exam period, it will not get posted for a period of six hours, which is plenty of time to keep it from anybody taking advantage of it.

**Jim:** Thomas mentioned in the chat saying he thinks the students are coming to campus only to be away from home, and not necessarily to attend an in-person class. There may be some truth to that. One thing that worries Jim is that for the spring 2021 semester, the university decided to do a full batch registration, which basically means students aren't going to get to pick their preferred time, instructor or format of instruction. Those kids that really want to be in face-to-face instruction may not be able to get into face-to-face classes. At the same time, students, who want to just stay at home and work remotely, may be in face-to-face instruction. The University is doing this because it's easier for them to schedule courses and classrooms. He also worries about the Registrar's Office using this as a mechanism to take control moving forward. Jim would rather have control come back to the School

**Jim:** Students could come to campus but still only enroll in online courses or switch to them. They do not necessarily have to take face-to-face courses.

**Thomas:** Both motions, the drop/withdrawal extension and the pass / no pass option will come before the Senate on Monday. So, there should be a vote on those. In the Educational Policy Committee, the drop/withdrawal extension motion garnered a lot of support, but the pass / no pass motion did not have much support. To pass in the Senate, a motion will need a two thirds majority.

**Jim:** Thinks that extending the drop/withdrawal date, but not doing the pass / no pass is the right decision.

**Thomas:** Since the pass/no pass was not used in the summer, the EPC is not that supportive of implementing it now again in the fall.

**Jim:** Would appreciate Thomas bringing that up at the Senate meeting

**Eckhard:** We are a little behind on sending out notes of these open forums. That is mostly due to the current promotion activities. We have been working on getting all of our documents in proper order and submitted. This took a lot of effort, but we will still deliver minutes of the Open Forums from two weeks ago and also from today. It was a great discussion today. Eckhard appreciated the comments and input and we'll take some additional actions based on that.