

## **APPENDIX O-2**

### **USE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM QUALITY**

#### **Exit Interviews**

The Department chair meets individually with each graduating student and gets their feedback on the Department. These exit interviews have been used effectively to improve the program. Here we present three specific examples of this process

#### **Advising in the Department**

Until 1999, the students in the department were advised only by individual faculty members. The Chair of the Undergraduate Program Committee tracked their progress. As a result:

- The advising was variable and in many cases, the individual faculty members were not able to provide specific information about alternate courses to take and whether a particular choice satisfied the College and University requirements.
- The tracking of the students' progress was poor.
- The recruitment and outreach activities of the department were not coordinated.
- The Undergraduate Program Committee and its Chair had to perform a large number of administrative tasks.
- There was very little departmental interactions with recruiters and the department did not provide assistance with job placement.

Based primarily on feedback from the students (e.g. see results of exit interviews for 98-99), faculty (during individual discussions in 1996), and feedback from pre-engineering advising group (in 1999), the administrative staff was reorganized, one secretarial position was eliminated and additional funds were secured from the College to recruit an Academic Counselor (the memo to the Dean requesting these changes is included).

As a result, all aspects of department/student interactions have improved. The problems outlined above have been specifically addressed. For details, please see the job description of the Academic Counselor in the Administrative Staff Restructuring package. In our 2000-2001 exit interviews with students, almost 90 % of them commented that "advising in the department is excellent".

#### **UG Computing Lab**

In the exit interviews with 1999-2000 students, they indicated that the department should acquire better computers and equipment. This became the focal point during the next year and an effort was launched which resulted in securing a donation of 16 top of the line computers from Intel Corp. They were all assigned to the UG lab. Once again, in our exit interview in Spring of 2001, almost 85% of the students have indicated that the computer lab and support is now good in the department.

#### **Single Degree**

We believe that this has been the most illustrative example of the EC 2000 process in our Department. It is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.3A and Appendix C-8 of this report.

## UG Advising in the Department

### Summary of exit interviews from 98-99

#### Strengths of the Program

- Small class/department size (26 out of 28)
- Group activity and labs (20 out of 28)
- Good faculty, staff and TAs and their willingness to help (16 out of 28)
- One on one interaction with faculty and among students (14 out of 28)
- Cooperation between faculty and students and among students (11 out of 28)

#### Suggestion for Changes

##### *Need for better advising (26 out of 28)*


- Duplication and overlap of content (19 out of 28)
- Clarify expectations for Senior project (13 out of 28)
- Improve interaction between juniors and seniors (13 out of 28)
- Hold classes in Mueller (11 out of 28)
- Too much content in some courses (8 out of 28)
- Too little content in some courses (7 out of 28)
- More project based classes and field trips (7 out of 28)
- More departmental electives on broader range of materials (5 out of 28)
- Involve students in faculty research. (4 out of 28)

See the memo to the Dean on the next page for departmental action taken as a result of these exit interview findings.

# Administrative Staff Restructuring Memo to Dean Denton

**DATE:** July 20, 1999

**TO:** Denice D. Denton, Dean  
College of Engineering

<b>FROM:</b> Raj Bordia, Chair	
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**SUBJECT:** Reorganization of Administrative Services Unit

In the Fall of 1996 you challenged departments to assess the way we do business in response to the ever-changing academic and research environment at the University of Washington. This challenge led us to initiate a plan to first institute changes in the technical support unit in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering and then turn our efforts to the administrative services unit. We began our internal assessment of the administrative office in the summer of 1998, keeping in mind the focus on student services highlighted in the department's vision statement. We began by reviewing our business in terms of our customer base for the academic and research programs in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering. The administrative staff worked together to make a list of services currently provided by the business office. The faculty and students were offered an opportunity to provide input and feedback to the list of services.

As a result of our review and analysis, it is clear that we need an Academic Counselor who will be able to direct student services in our department. In the past, most of the academic advising has been done by faculty. Currently, the Office Assistant III position provides support to this function. In order to meet the academic needs of our faculty and our students, we need to have an Academic Counselor who will be able to provide on a consistent and regular basis a high level of advice and counsel to our students and will be able to manage undergraduate and graduate activities in the department. A copy of the Academic Counselor job description is attached as Attachment A. This is a new position, for which we will recruit. We would like to submit a personnel request as early as the week of July 19<sup>th</sup> to have a new academic counselor here early Autumn Quarter.

The Office Assistant III position duties will be revised to include receptionist duties, support for proposal preparation, typing and data entry, receiving and checking in supplies, and maintenance of various departmental lists. This position may also continue to provide some clerical support for the Academic Counselor, such as filing, assembly and distribution of prospective student information. A copy of the revised job description is included as Attachment B. We currently have an incumbent in the Office Assistant III position. She has received a copy of the new job description and has been advised that it will remain an Office Assistant III classification and she will begin working under that job description as soon as the Academic Counselor has been hired. The incumbent has been providing Office Assistant III clerical support to the student services area; she has not been performing Academic Counselor work and the new job description modifies the support work that she will be providing to the student services area.

We have also determined that the Chair's position requires a full-time, higher-level assistant. The position most suitable is the Administrative Assistant A classification. This position will have a much higher level of responsibility than either the current Secretary Lead or the Program Assistant positions. The Administrative Assistant will be responsible for providing staff support to the Chair of Materials Science and Engineering. The position will represent the administrator in her absence, and will coordinate a variety of administrative functions including, but not limited

to, management of Chair's Office, coordination of academic appointments in the department, alumni relations and development, upkeep of the department web page, interfacing with college and university databases, upkeep of department brochures and publication of department newsletter. This position, supporting the chair's activities, provides a different kind of support than the Secretary Lead and the Program Assistant. The duties are much more extensive and require a higher degree of independence. A copy of the Administrative Assistant A's job description is included as Attachment C.

At the current time, we have a 50% Secretary Lead position who reports directly to the Chair of the Department. Because we have a need for the higher-level, full-time Administrative Assistant A position, we will no longer need the Secretary Lead position. Unfortunately, for business operations, this change must be made. Therefore, it is with regret that I must request that Ms. Patti Bellecy, who has been in our employ for eight years as the Secretary Lead, be laid off from her Secretary Lead position effective October 1, 1999. Ms. Bellecy's cyclical appointment is from September 1 through June 30, therefore she will return for one month in September to work on special projects unless she finds another job before September 1, 1999.

Effective July 12, 1999, Jay Montague, who currently holds the position of Program Assistant, will assume Ms. Bellecy's duties and the higher-level functions in the Administrative Assistant job, as well as continuing some of his current duties. After Mr. Montague has satisfactorily assumed the full responsibilities included in the Administrative Assistant A position description, we will submit a request for reclassification for him from Program Assistant to Administrative Assistant A.

The review revealed that Fiscal Specialist II is the correct position for the fiscal tasks required by the department. Jay Montague currently monitors a few WTC budgets, which will be added to the Fiscal Specialist II's duties. A copy of that job description is included as Attachment D.

The Administrator's job description will be modified after the transitions have taken place.

cc: M.A. Bill  
J. Brouelette

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Concurrence: Denice D. Denton

## **JOB DESCRIPTION: Academic Counselor**

Materials Science & Engineering

July 2003

### ***Position Purpose***

This position provides services to undergraduate and graduate students and professional academic support to the Department of Materials Science & Engineering. The incumbent is responsible for coordinating student advising, recruiting, and admissions and for managing information related to students and teaching, course management, and event management, as related to student and academic services for the unit. This individual will independently perform duties with minimal direction; work in partnership with MSE and COE staff and faculty; and collaborate with other departments, schools, and colleges.

### ***General Duties***

#### ***Advising:***

- Advise pre-engineering and Materials Science and Engineering undergraduate students regarding departmental, college, and university requirements and procedures for satisfactory progress and degree completion.
  - Evaluate students for probable success in the department
  - Process *Change of Major* forms
  - Conduct degree audits
  - Review credit evaluations for transfer students and determine appropriate course equivalencies
  - Develop quarterly schedules for students
  - Create long-term curricular plans for students
  - Make recommendations for technical electives
  - Track scholarship status of students
    - Send Low-Scholarship letters to students on probation
    - Meet with students on probation to discuss strategies for improvement
    - Direct students to appropriate faculty, campus services and/or programs, as necessary
  - Advise students of scholarship opportunities
    - Administer (at the departmental level) annual COE undergraduate scholarship process and selection
  - Complete and submit graduation applications
  - Answer career placement questions, and refer to additional resources
    - Send out job opening announcements via student email list, and maintain historical record of previous employers in the Advising Office “Job Binder”.
- Advise Materials Science & Engineering graduate students regarding departmental, college, and university requirements and procedures for satisfactory progress and degree completion.
  - Meet with MS and PhD students to discuss departmental credit requirements.
  - Conduct degree audits of MS students, and review and approve submitted *Degree Plans*.

- Assist PhD students in developing course schedules in preparation for the biannual PhD Qualifying Exam.
- Establish and edit PhD Supervisory Committees using MyGrad on-line system.
- Administer graduate student transfer credit requests using Graduate School petitions.
- Process *On-Leave* requests.
- Track scholarship status of students, using Graduate School guidelines.
- Review Graduate School end-of-quarter low scholarship reports and notify students of any departmental action to be taken.
- Facilitate completion of graduation and candidacy *Warrants* required by the Graduate School.
- Answer career placement questions, and refer to additional resources.
  - Send out job opening announcements via student email list, and maintain historical record of previous employers in the Advising Office “Job Binder”.

***Recruiting:***

- Compose, draft, and edit program materials for undergraduates and graduates
- Email individual course information to other advisor and student lists to advertise specific offerings.
- Present recruitment and information sessions (at both the undergraduate and graduate levels) in a variety of settings, including:
  - WISE Orientations
  - *Plan A Transfer Day*
  - MSEP sessions
  - COE Pre-Engineering *Sundaes on Wednesdays*
  - Graduate school information sessions for current MSE undergraduates
- Respond to requests for program information from prospective students.
- Develop recruitment and funding strategies for new graduate students with the Graduate Faculty Advisor.
  - Draft and submit bi-annual *Graduate School Fund for Excellence and Innovation* recruitment funding proposal.
- Organize, and act as host of, recruitment visits of graduate applicants.
  - Make recommendations to Graduate Faculty Advisor as to which applicant(s) to invite.

***Admissions:***

- Administer admissions for MSE undergraduate and graduate students.
  - Process applications
  - Evaluate applications for minimum university and departmental admission requirements
  - Notify faculty committees of any deficiencies
  - Calculate grade point averages
  - Schedule, facilitate, and participate in review meetings with faculty committees regarding final admission and funding decisions
  - Notify students regarding admission or denial of admission.
- Calculate admission statistics.

***Information Management:***

- Create and maintain relational databases for all aspects related to departmental advising, admissions, graduations, current students, and course information.
- Update and revise databases, as needed, for tracking and statistical reporting purposes.
- Ensure accuracy of information on departmental web pages.

***Course Management:***

- Advise Director and Faculty Advisors on current curricular needs.
- Coordinate requests to Room Assignments for special faculty teaching needs.
- Administer quarterly UW Time Schedule course offerings.
  - Determine proper course restrictions.
  - Monitor enrollment trends and make changes to course limits, as necessary.
- Draft, submit and process new course and course change applications.
- Coordinate textbook orders.
- Coordinate course evaluations.

***Event Management:***

- Plan, organize and host departmental events throughout the year, including:
  - New Graduate Student Orientation
  - Autumn Quarter first seminar reception
  - New Undergraduate Student Orientation
- Help organize and participate in annual Graduation Reception
- Help organize and participate in annual College of Engineering Open House.

***Program Reviews:***

- Facilitate and participate in departmental reviews (such as ABET accreditation and Graduate School review).

***Departmental Representation:***

- Represent department at various college and university meetings, including:
  - UW All-Advisor Meeting (quarterly)
  - College of Engineering Advisors Meeting (monthly)
  - Graduate School Annual Workshop
  - UW Graduate Admissions meetings
- Act as day-to-day program liaison with UW distance learning, specifically the Education at a Distance for Growth and Excellence (EDGE) office.

## Summary of exit interviews from 2000-2001

### Strengths of the Program

- *Excellent advising (20 out of 21)*
- Small class/department size (20 out of 21)
- Good computer labs and support (18 out of 21)
- Group activity and labs (14 out of 21)
- Good faculty, staff and TAs and their willingness to help (13 out of 21)
- One on one interaction with faculty and among students (11 out of 21)
- Interdisciplinary (9 out of 21)
- Cooperation between faculty and students and among students (7 out of 21)

### Suggestion for Changes/Complaints

- Better equipment (15 out of 21)
- Last minute changes in due dates (14 out of 21)
- Extensive cheating (14 out of 21)
- Duplication and overlap of content (12 out of 21)
- Clarify expectations for Senior project (9 out of 21)
- Improve interaction between juniors and seniors (7 out of 21)
- More project based classes and field trips (7 out of 21)
- TAs not prepared, labs do not work (4 out of 21)
- More departmental electives on broader range of materials (4 out of 21)

## Department Infrastructure for UG Computing

### Student exit interviews 1999-2000

#### Strengths of the Program

- Small class/department size (25 out of 28)
- Group activity and labs (21 out of 28)
- Good faculty, staff and TAs and their willingness to help (17 out of 28)
- One on one interaction with faculty and among students (13 out of 28)
- Interdisciplinary (8 out of 28)
- Cooperation between faculty and students and among students (8 out of 28)

#### Suggestion for Changes

- ***Better equipment, newer computers (24 out of 28)***
- Duplication and overlap of content (16 out of 28)
- Clarify expectations for Senior project (11 out of 28)
- Improve interaction between juniors and seniors (9 out of 28)
- Hold classes in Mueller (9 out of 28)
- Too much content; too little content (6 out of 28)
- More project based classes and field trips (5 out of 28)
- More departmental electives on broader range of materials (5 out of 28)

We focused on improving the undergraduate computing in the Department to address the weaknesses identified by the students. This was accomplished in one year as noted by the students in their exit interview for 2000-01 (next page).

## Summary of exit interviews from 2000-2001

### Strengths of the Program

- Excellent advising (20 out of 21)
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