DATE: 29 October 2010

TO: Jim Kurtenbach, Associate Dean of Operations, chair
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FROM: Jonathan Wickert
Dean, College of Engineering

SUBJECT: Strategic and Operational Planning Committee

The Board of Regents and the university each recently completed new strategic plans, and it is now time for the College of Engineering to plan and establish a foundation for the coming years. Thank you for your willingness to serve on the college’s Strategic and Operational Planning Committee, which is charged to outline the path forward so that the college continues to deliver superior performance, make a distinctive impact, and be known for enduring contributions in education, discovery, and extension.

This committee will proactively engage the college’s community in a visioning and planning process through informal discussions, structured meetings, and open forums with faculty, staff, and students; with departmental advisory boards; and with colleagues at ISU in other colleges and research centers. You will further solicit ideas and feedback from the Dean’s Budget and Planning Advisory Committee, the college’s Senior Leadership, and the Dean’s Cabinet. Your committee should be able to hit the ground running by building off the many good ideas that were captured in last year’s college-wide task force reports.

You will work with a subcommittee of the college’s industrial advisory committee as a sounding board for ideas and as a means to challenge and stretch our thinking. The advisory committee will be chaired by Rob Jablonski and include as members:
Tom Bluth, Caterpillar; Margaret Harding, 4 Factor Consulting; Mark Henthorn, Stanley Group; Bob John, Consultant; Kim Pastega, Boeing; Sharon Krause, Rancher/Entrepreneur; Bob Lane, Shell; Klaus Hoehn, John Deere.

In the coming years, we will be educating a generation of savvy, market-driven, and technology-enabled students, and we will compete for students, faculty, and research grants on an increasingly global scale. I encourage you to think in terms of our customers, markets, and products, and relentlessly focus on our comparative advantage and differentiation relative to peer and aspirant colleges of engineering. In the spirit of guidance from the dean’s office, structure the strategic plan around these five overarching themes:

1. **Business and Social Responsibility.** Our customer-centric philosophy to ethical business conduct, sustainability, shared governance, diversity and inclusion, and being a model for efficiency and collaboration across campus.
2. **Twenty-First Century Learning.** The college’s framework for engineering taught in social context, learning outside the classroom, engineering leadership and strategy, digital coursework and time-shifted learning, interdisciplinary education, global engagement, and lifelong learning.
3. **Discovery.** The growing impact made by our faculty, staff, and students in addressing the problems of our times through scholarly research, and by leveraging and strengthening our core competencies and interdisciplinary teams.
4. **Student Success.** The college’s brand and educational value chain, recruiting from established and new markets, and retention and degree attainment particularly for traditionally under-represented students.
5. **Multidimensional Partnerships.** Our commitment to deep and lasting win-win relationships with colleagues on-campus, other educational institutions, alumni, corporations, and state and federal agencies.

By no later than May 1, 2011, your committee’s deliverables to me will be:

1. A two-page **strategic plan**, looking out five years, summarizing our shared mission, vision, and goals. The plan will center on the student learning experience; be true to the land grant values of education, discovery, and extension; and be aligned with the university’s strategic plan.
2. A three-year **rolling operational plan** that addresses the resource and best-in-class business practices needed to incrementally reach our goals through continuous improvement. The operational plan will link the strategic plan (which sets broad direction) and the annual operating budget (which reflects current year revenue and expenditures).
3. A realistically-sized set of **key performance indicators** and targets that we will track and advertise, and that are aligned with those of the university and Board of Regents. The targets will be set based benchmarking that you conduct of peer and aspirant engineering colleges, and of appropriate nonacademic organizations.
4. A **punch list** of the committee’s top-ten recommendations of actions that can be taken to secure early wins and build momentum toward meeting the strategic plan’s goals.
As your work proceeds, you will share drafts of those documents through the college’s Budget and Planning website for others to review and comment upon.

Again, I very much appreciate you offering your time and expertise to the committee, and I look forward to working with you on this important planning activity.

cc: COE senior leadership  
ECIAC strategic planning subcommittee (Rob Jablonski, chair)  
Att: Task force reports from last year  
(http://www.engineering.iastate.edu/index.php?id=7794)  
Engineering college’s previous strategic plan  
(http://www.engineering.iastate.edu/strategic-plan.html)  
Iowa State University’s 2010-2015 strategic plan (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/sp/)  
Board of Regents 2010-2016 strategic plan