

AAME BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 14, 2005

A meeting of the Arkansas Academy of Mechanical Engineering was held October 14, 2005 at Rheem Co. offices in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Those attending were Chairman Amos Pack, Chris Weiser, Lamar Pettus, Charles Batson, JR Jones, Don Johnston, Jim Kimzey, Mike Hays, Michael Stewart, Dr. Schmidt, Bill Green and Dr. Joe Rencis.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pack. Minutes of the June 17, 2005 meeting were amended to correct JR Jones' name and were approved.

Dr. Rencis gave the M.E. Department update. He reported:

- Two new faculty have been hired;
  - Douglas Spearot – Assistant Professor. PhD from GA Tech.
  - Sulin Zhang – Assistant Professor. PhD from U. of IL.
- Total Enrollment at the U of A was at an all time high in 2005, however freshman enrollment is flat in the College of Engineering. There was a decrease at the BS level offset by an increase at the graduate level. In the ME department, freshman enrollment is off compared to 2004, however it is still significantly higher than years prior to 2003. Also, the freshman class of 2005 does not appear to be as talented as prior classes. ACT scores, GPA and numbers enrolled in the Honors College are all down. Total Enrollment in the ME department has been steadily increasing over the past several years.
- UAF B.S. is getting more support from the U of A system. The program at Fort Smith currently has 2 staff. John Hamilton is the ME on-site coordinator. He lives in Fort Smith, is the on site coordinator and teacher. James Davis is the assistant department head. He is on site 2 days per week to coordinate courses and ensure consistency. An administrative assistant is to be added for the spring semester. Dr. Rencis visits Fort Smith at least two times per year to review the program and make suggestions/improvements. Currently 50% of course work is taught on site. The remainder is taught via video. Goal is to have all required course work taught on site.

New programs are being discussed with UCA and NWACC.

- There were several student awards.
  1. World Solar Splash Championship – solar boat competition. Finished 2<sup>nd</sup> overall. Competition will be in Fayetteville June 21 – 25, 2006
  2. First runner-up for best paper award. Title: Freshman Retention Study for Mechanical Engineering at the U of A. Authors: Stephen Taylor, Darin Nutter; James Davis; Joe Rencis.
  3. Outstanding Student Chapter for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row. In addition students have a 90% pass rate on the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam and there were 75 Chancellor Scholars in the ME program last year.
  
- ME Research Expenditures were up in 2005, totaling about \$1.234 million. Forecast is for 2006 to be up from that level.
  
- Several faculty have received new research grants.
  1. Ajay Malshe. From the National Science Foundation. Three projects totaling \$28,856. Also four other grants from varying sources totaling \$1,042,206.
  2. Larry Roe. Three grants totaling \$42,277.
  3. Ashok Saxena, Greg Salamo, Ron Foster, Carol Reeves and Scott Hancock. From the National Science Foundation - \$385,706.
  4. Steve Tung. From the National Science Foundation. \$6,000.
  5. Min Zou, Steve Tung and Jin-woo Kim. Two grants from the National Science Foundation totaling \$135,000.
  
- Status of special projects:
  1. ME Freshman Retention Program. Program isn't working as desired. Students like the idea but the numbers don't show the program has improved retention. Retention is unchanged at 53%.
  2. AAME Project Presentation Day. First presentation was Spring 05. This project was a success and will occur again at the end of the fall 05 semester. Posters will be displayed in the ME building. AAME members are judges. Fall 05 will include Fort Smith students.

3. ME TV Showcase. This project has been delayed because of other priorities.
  4. ME Web page. UofA has changed their format. This will delay the project until the new format is in place.
  5. ME Reception Area. This project is in process.
- ME department projects to be completed this year:
    1. Faculty recruitment. 2 positions to fill.
    2. Postcard to US schools department heads to increase awareness of the UofA and improve national rating of the ME Department. Currently 133<sup>rd</sup> of 165. Goal to be between 69<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup>.
    3. Nomination of several faculty for external awards to improve national recognition of the department.

#### Treasurers Report:

Michael Hays reported that the financial position of the Academy was good. The cash account was getting large so on July 1, 2005 \$30,000 was moved to the Quasi-Endowment. Total assets of the Academy are \$166,738.42. Don Johnston moved that the financial report be approved. Seconded by JR Jones. The motion passed.

#### Committee Reports:

Membership: 5 names were submitted for induction to the Academy by chair Michael Stewart. Those names will be submitted to the membership for approval.

Nominations: No report

Budget: No report.

Conduct (bylaws and Constitution): Chairman Green suggested we make 2 changes to the bylaws. One to increase the membership allowed in the Academy and one to add into the bylaws a standing committee to make nominations for the annual College of Engineering awards. The bylaws will be amended and presented to the board at the February 3, 2006 meeting. If approved at that meeting, new bylaws will be presented to the membership at the annual meeting.

Career Orientation: Chairman Johnston reported that there will be 7 presenters for career orientation. There is a lot of diversity in the presenters, both from industries presenting and age. There is \$500 available for prize drawings at the end of the day.

Fundraising: Chairman Weiser reported that letters have been sent to the membership encouraging gifts to AAME with the hope of funding an AAME endowed chair. Efforts are ongoing.

Newsletter: Chairman Kimzey requested that the newsletter expand from 2 pages to 4. That was approved. It was also suggested that we move to electronic distribution. Dr. Rencis agreed to convert the newsletter to a PDF file and email. However there are about 40 members that do not have email addresses and will have to be mailed. It was also agreed that since new Secretary Weiser was wordy, Chairman Kimzey would have editorial license to paraphrase the minutes as well as other articles and make them shorter and more to the point. It was also suggested to put the minutes on the website.

Other business: College of Engineering awards nominations. Young engineer – Jerry Newton. Distinguished Engineer – David Watts. There was no Hall of Fame Nominee. Bill Green moved that these nominees be accepted. Jim Kimzey seconded the nomination. The motion passed.

The annual speaker will be wildlife photographer Tim Ernst.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2006 in Russellville.

Following the meeting there was a tour of the Rheem facility. Thanks to JR Jones for his hospitality. Providing lunch and the tour.