

Baylor University
School of Engineering and Computer Science
Board of Advocates
Spring Meeting – April 16, 2010
Hilton-Waco

Board members attending: Mark Cannata, Beth Casteel, Larry Johnson, Fred Logan, Rick Maule, Bill Mearse, Jim McDonough, Craig Nickell, Harold Rafuse, Bill Ratfield, Ken Ross, Andy Spencer, Dean Swisher, Matt Watson, and Jim Wiethorn

Board members absent: Stephen Butt, Joe Cestari, Shawn Sedate, Steve Smith, Harold Spangler, Kevin Taylor, Trent Voigt, and Richard Willis

Others attending: Dean Ben Kelley, Don Gaitros, Bill Jordan, Kwang Lee, Kevin Ludlum, Adam Ecklund, Leigh Ann Marshall, Cheryl Tucker, and various faculty, staff, and students from the School of Engineering and Computer Science

Welcome

Following a continental breakfast, Bill Mearse convened the meeting. He introduced Dr. Kevin Jackson, Vice President for Student Life. Dr. Jackson joined Baylor on July 1, 2009, coming from Texas A&M University and bringing 27 years of experience to his position. Dr. Jackson oversees the areas of campus life, student development, student learning and engagement through residence life and university ministries.

Dr. Jackson gave the Board an [overview of Baylor campus life](#). He stated the mission of the Division of Student Life: “to enrich the Baylor experience through life changing programs and services resulting in an integrated education known for leadership, service, Christian faith, and the total development of students.” Among the challenges to fulfilling that mission are that “this generation of students has a more pessimistic outlook of life.” There are more complex psychological issues that require more structure. The current approach to engaging students is through activities such as [Line Camp](#)—the new students’ introduction to Baylor. Additionally, events and student organizations should enable students to learn skills.

Dr. Jackson said that Baylor is one of the most diverse campuses of any major universities. A challenge is how to successfully incorporate that diversity. He gave some examples from the [Department of Multicultural Affairs](#) of some organizations and activities that support diversity. He also outlined the organizational structure of the Division of Student Life and thanked the School of Engineering & Computer Science for its partnership.

Board members Mearse and Swisher asked Dr. Jackson about his comments on the incidence of depression among the student body. Specifically, how are these trends tracked before students are college-aged? Dr. Jackson cited reports of studies being conducted in middle and high schools that track trends and characteristics of students who might be at risk for suicide. There are also triggers

that Baylor faculty can make use of to report students they feel might be experiencing emotional trouble.

Dean's Report

Following Dr. Jackson's comments, Dean Kelley provided the Dean's Report. He outlined the announcements of the first engineering Ph.D. at Baylor and the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative (BRIC) as part of the Central Texas Research and Technology Park. He also mentioned recent faculty research and outstanding students' conference participation. He gave a recruitment and enrollment recap and closed with an introduction to "[The ECS Players](#)" in a skit about the School's strategic planning process.

Strategic Plan Update

Following Dean Kelley's report, Ms. Ashley Thornton reported to the Board the progress of the School's strategic plan. She reviewed the [strategic planning process](#) and the [current draft of the Three-Year Plan](#) from the Board members' meeting packets.

Dean Swisher asked about the metrics' timeframe. Ms. Thornton answered by saying the process includes laying the groundwork for development metrics and targets. An annual "scorecard" will be used to measure success. Larry Johnson emphasized the need for "measureable goals to determine success." Also, he said, things may change when Baylor's new president arrives, and he encouraged ECS to make use of the "window of opportunity" that will open when new leadership arrives.

Dean Kelley offered that, since ECS is always in an accreditation process, there is a continuous cycle of review. Efforts are being made to fit the strategic plan into the School's accreditation and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) university accreditation processes.

Rick Maule suggested that the three-year target presents an unpredictable horizon. The length of time to measure ought to be shortened to a semester's length. He said, "Actionable goals with short term accountables are necessary." Bill Ratfield added that the short term enables energy levels and morale to remain high. Harold Rafuse, as a member of the strategic planning team, recalled the process. He said that the team attempted to create more metrics, but the process "got bogged down."

Jim McDonough asked about the "Wow factor" in the aspirations. He said "aspirations are supporting statements" and results should be visible by the end of three years. He asked what the "big and bold" result(s) will be at the end of the three-year period. Rick Maule agreed and said the distinctives should be visible to parents and students. Ms. Thornton responded that the process has not moved far enough along to have "crystallized." Further, this draft is an internal document. Eventually, several versions of the document will be developed and aimed for a particular audience, such as student recruitment and development. Bill Mearse suggested that parents will be interested in how students arrived to ECS and their development to graduation.

The discussion then turned toward the arrival of incoming President Ken Starr. The Board suggested that the statements in the strategic plan should help make a great first impression of ECS for Judge Starr and how to translate the draft into a version that will instill ideas for Judge Starr's accomplishments during his tenure. Ideas for content and delivery of the ECS introduction to Judge Starr were introduced and discussed. Board members noted Judge Starr's legal experience and fund-raising reputation.

Update: ECS Student Life

Mr. Adam Ecklund, Director of ECS Student Initiatives, gave a presentation detailing student life progress within the School of Engineering and Computer Science. He discussed the Engineering and Computer Science Living-Learning Center, new ECS student life initiatives, an enrollment update, student recruitment activities, the Renaissance Scholar program, and a list of student outcomes. In response to a question about retention, Mr. Ecklund described the “Bridge Program” for lower profile students and suggested the need for a pre-engineering program.

Mr. Spencer asked for comment on students choosing Baylor over other impressive universities. Mr. Ecklund responded that most prospective students are considering other engineering and computer science programs in Texas.

Mr. McDonough asked about 4-year degree completion rates. Mr. Ecklund agreed that completing the degree in four years is a priority, not only in ECS but at Baylor in general.

Mr. Ecklund then introduced a panel of students who spoke to various aspects of student life, such as leadership, the Christian experience, scholarship athletics, the ECS-Living Learning Center, and balancing other extra-curricular activities.

Lunch: Summer Internship Presentation

Following lunch, the Board heard from Ms. Alicia Rogers, a senior bioinformatics student, about her summer research internship experience at the SoCal Bioinformatics Summer Institute.

Update: ECS Development

After lunch, Dr. Kevin Ludlum gave the Board a report on the past year’s fundraising progress. He detailed sources of financial support and what development activity occurred in the previous year. He introduced the Board to the new printed brochure detailing the game development and simulated environments (GDSE) program, the Corporate Partner window display in the Rogers Building, and fundraising website improvements. He also informed the Board about the Baylor Network’s new venture, the “Virtual Network,” a career resource for alumni. Finally, he described the ECS presence on social networking sites, FaceBook and Linked In. He showed some graphs relating to fiscal year 2010 sources of support and outlined fundraising goals for the coming year. In response to Board questions, Dr. Ludlum reported that fundraising sources for new ECS facilities are being cultivated over an 18-24 month period. The new Ph.D. program and endowed faculty positions remain high priorities, although endowed faculty positions are difficult to fund. Mr. Ludlum concluded by revealing to the Board his and his team’s priority of fundraising for the School of Business, which is ahead of ECS in terms of established priority. Dean Kelley interjected that success of Business School fundraising should enable ECS success, too.

Full Board Closed Session

The Board members met in closed session.

Full Board Session

Following the closed sessions, the Board reconvened with the Dean and other Baylor faculty and staff for the final session. Mr. Mearse summarized the Board's response. He said there is much positive progress happening. Specifically, enrollment growth, while at the expense of other areas within the University, is good and supports the Board's encouragement toward "critical mass." The BRIC shows significant commitment by the University. Focus on student initiatives is a "differentiator" for Baylor, and the Board continues to be impressed.

He further said that there will be additional momentum gained by the arrival of Judge Starr. He relayed the Board's encouragement to the Dean to be ready to present the ECS introduction to Judge Starr and emphasized the importance of being concise and in "sales mode." The Board offered to assist in any way possible to make the ECS introduction successful.

Regarding the ECS Strategic Plan, Mr. Mearse conveyed the Board's coolness toward the process. The Board, he said, understands the strategic plan and acknowledges that it may be more about process than content. He cautioned avoidance of two traps: (1) being too enamored with the process and (2) "analysis paralysis." The key is to keep the destination and resources in mind and focus those resources as "crisply as possible."

In the upcoming meeting with Judge Starr, the Board suggested taking three needs from the strategic plan and incorporating them into the presentation. Further, the Board felt the strategic plan is more of a "point on the horizon" to move toward.

Mr. Mearse conveyed the Board's pleasure with the progress Dr. Ludlum and the development team have made with alumni interaction. However, he continued, Dr. Ludlum will be spending much upcoming time fundraising for the Business School rather than for ECS, and that is a Board concern. Momentum may be lost during that time. Other Board members agreed and also said that there is a level of discomfort with Dr. Ludlum working for ECS and the Business School. There should be a sense of urgent demand for ECS.

On another topic, Mr. Mearse conveyed the Board's caution to avoid "sacred cows," such as the ICPC. What can be the value to Baylor if Baylor's team—and American universities in general—aren't competitive? To this, Dr. Gaitros responded that the ICPC helps Baylor maintain its ranking through name association. Mr. Mearse asked ECS to demonstrate how the ICPC provides impact for Baylor and the ECS footprint at Baylor, also including alumni. Mr. Ross added the caution against the "20/80 Rule: spending 80% of time for 20% of the results," especially with the BRIC may be an 80% priority.

Mr. Swisher added that it is an exciting time for ECS; there is much positive momentum. Mr. Mearse agreed and said the Board appreciates the progress presented at today's meeting. He congratulated Dean Kelley on this progress and repeated the Board's desire to help, including more than twice a year, when Board meetings occur.

Mr. Mearse recognized the Board members who ended their terms of service and were leaving: Larry Johnson, Rick Maule, Bill Ratfield, and Matt Watson. He also recognized one Board member who will serve an additional three-year term: Fred Logan. Finally, the Board agreed to meet next on October 1, 2010. Following these recognitions and comments, the spring meeting adjourned.