

**College of Engineering and Applied Science  
Department of Civil Engineering and Mechanics  
Minutes of the Industrial Advisory Council Meeting**

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Date: November 11, 1999

Place: EMS E375

Members Present: M. Aquino, H. Farchmin, L. Graef, D. Pritchard, R. Videkovich

Faculty Present: Profs. Beimborn, Bratanow, Bravo, Ghorbanpoor, Helwany, Horowitz, Lee, Shaikh, Tabatabai

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The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM. Prof. Ghorbanpoor welcomed the members of the Industrial Advisory Council (IAC).

Graduate Program - Dual Accreditation:

Mr. Graef suggested that the department should look into dual level accreditation that includes master's level accreditation. He indicated that such an effort would bring substantial attention to the UWM program. Mr. Farchmin noted that criteria for advanced level accreditation currently exist, and processes and timing are the same as the undergraduate accreditation. Prof. Ghorbanpoor stated that the graduate program is reviewed by outside consultants every ten years, the results of which are issued in the form of a report. Professors Shaikh and Ghorbanpoor suggested that the department should obtain information on the subject and look into possible dual accreditation.

Attracting Students

Prof. Beimborn brought up the issue of attracting students to pursue Master's degrees. Faculty and IAC members discussed the pros and cons of Friday or Saturday classes to accommodate working students. Prof. Ghorbanpoor stated that the department would look at these options.

"Depth" vs. "Breadth"

Prof. Beimborn also brought up the issue of "depth" versus "breadth" in educating students. Most IAC members agreed that they preferred that the graduates have a sufficient depth of knowledge within their fields of interest. Mr. Videkovich noted that general or municipal civil engineering is more breadth oriented than other areas.

Construction Project Management

Prof. Ghorbanpoor asked for the opinions of the IAC members regarding a construction management program. Mr. Videkovich noted that industry practitioners (and not academicians) should teach courses in such a program. Mr. Pritchard suggested that

project management should be included. Mr. Aquino stated that there is a great need for design-build professionals.

### Thesis Program

Prof. Beimborn solicited comments on the thesis program and ways of making it more meaningful. Prof. Lee noted that there are currently two options available; a thesis option and a non-thesis option, and the majority of part-time student are taking the non-thesis option. Prof. Beimborn recalled that the department used to have a design option, which has now fallen under the thesis program. Mr. Pritchard stated that the students should strive for higher levels and therefore a thesis should be required. Mr. Pritchard also noted that theses should be challenging, whether it is research oriented or otherwise. Prof. Ghorbanpoor agreed that the thesis program results in more mature graduates. Prof. Beimborn suggested seeking agreement between the University, students and companies on the thesis topics. Professors Shaikh and Horowitz suggested that an outside member (from the companies) should be part of the committee. Mr. Videkovich stated that the requirements for theses should not be watered down. Prof. Bravo noted that design options for theses would also not afford the faculty the research and publication opportunities that they need for professional growth.

### Seminar Program

Prof. Ghorbanpoor proposed that a program of seminars be developed to get more exposure for our students. He suggested that the students attend 8 to 10 seminars presented by practitioners and academicians on various topics. Mr. Graef noted that, through the seminars, the students may get exposed to topics related to the history of our profession and professional ethics. Mr. Pritchard suggested presentations on the topic of “conflict of interest”.

### Graduate Co-op

Prof. Beimborn brought up the issue of formalized internships at the graduate level. Mr. Pritchard supported the idea. Mr. Graef suggested that if co-op programs could work for undergraduates, they should also work for the graduate students. Prof. Beimborn noted that many graduate students want to have committed funding prior to coming to UWM to pursue their degrees. Mr. Graef noted that the employers on the other hand do not wish to make commitments to hire unless they have had a chance to interview the candidates. Prof. Tabatabai proposed that the College develop a program in which a number of students are admitted to the graduate program with commitments for funding based on their qualifications. He suggested that various companies could participate in the program by prior commitment of funds to hire one or more students per year. They would also participate in the initial screening and selection of students. After the students arrive, the employers would have an opportunity to interview them in person and select the appropriate candidates. If there were any students who are not picked up by the industry, then the college must provide a safety net for them using a pooled fund created by the industry. Mr. Aquino suggested that a plan be developed and communicated to the

industry to get their reaction. Prof. Tabatabai noted that this plan could also be part of the Chancellor's Milwaukee Idea program.

#### Department Mission Statement

As a first step in addressing the mission statement, Mr. Videkovich asked about the type of "product" that the department wished to produce in the undergraduate program. Mr. Farchmin noted that the mission statement should have an outward focus. He expressed the view that, as currently written, the mission statement has an inward focus. He noted that the statement should address what the student would be after graduation. Mr. Graef stated that the last paragraph of Section 5 should be removed. Mr. Videkovich suggested including the term "institution of choice for employers". Mr. Graef suggested obtaining mission statements from other urban universities and matching them to the department skills.

Mr. Graef also noted the term "theoretical and applied mechanics" in the statement and asked whether UWM currently has a viable program in this area. Mr. Videkovich made a suggestion to rename the department to the "Department of Infrastructure Engineering". Prof. Ghorbanpoor stated that the department would develop a draft of a new mission statement.

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The IAC meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Habib Tabatabai  
Recording Secretary