May 8, 2007

To: University Program Planning Review Committee

From: Belle Wei
Dean of Engineering

Subject: Electrical Engineering (EE) Program Planning Review Report

The external reviewer was pleased with the Department and cited among its strengths: high quality of faculty, deep involvement with industry, a strong curriculum, and an appreciative student body. The reviewer also identified some challenges for EE department, particularly the EE curriculum, assessment, enrollment/retention, and faculty development.

The BSEE and MSEE programs are of high quality. The students are pleased with their education and with the EE faculty. The EE faculty are actively engaged in scholarly work to enhance and improve their courses’ content and the EE curriculum. The Department has developed and implemented a comprehensive assessment plan with a three-year assessment cycle. Since the last Program Planning Review, the Department has taken steps towards a long-term plan delineating the department’s objectives, goals, and priorities for areas of excellence.

I would like to encourage the department to work with an advisory Board committee comprised of distinguished alumni, industry representatives and academic experts to achieve its ambitious plans, particularly in light of the strategic location of the College in Silicon Valley. I would encourage the Department to revise and improve the EE curriculum to respond to the industry demands and to align the core courses with the EE emphases. Also, I would recommend that the EE department should develop a strategy and process with an academic year’s assessment plan for students’ outreach, recruitment, and retention. The EE department has been aggressively recruiting faculty to replace a number of retiring senior faculty and plans to add new positions in wireless communications and analog/mixed signal testing. This move would bring well-deserved recognition and increase the program’s appeal to the local industry.

I look forward to participating in laying out the strategy and helping with developing the required resources.

cc: Avtar Singh, Department Chair
Ping Hsu, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Ahmed Hambaba, Associate Dean of Graduate & Extended Studies