

Student Advisory Board Summary Report

On March 2nd, 2012, a focus group meet was held and moderated by Professors Brandenburg and Stolzenbach with the intention of gathering feedback about the department program and objectives from undergraduate students. In addition to the two faculty members, we, as undergraduate student leaders, enlisted around 10 students ranging from freshman to seniors to sit in and provide input during the group meeting. Several of the undergraduate student leaders also attended the IAB meeting earlier in the year. Below is a summary of issues and concerns we presented to the faculty during the session and our own take on potential avenues to address these issues.

Attending Students:

Ryan Vanderlip, ASCE President, CEE13
Molly Meertens, ASCE Vice President, CEE13
Justin Maynard, ASCE Project Executive, CEE12
Amy Derrett, ASCE, CEE12
Bryan Carpentier, Chi Epsilon President, CEE13
Kendra Rusinek, Chi Epsilon Vice President, CEE13
Ben Wong, ASCE, CEE12
Brooke Crowe, ASCE, CEE14
Tandre Oey, CEE14
Vivek Manickham, ASCE, CEE15

AutoCAD/Modeling/GIS Classes

Availability of classes based in training in AutoCAD and GIS software is limited. We are expected to know or be able to use these programs in a fairly limited way for some upper division courses (141, 157L/M, 143, 144, 135L, etc); however, UCLA's Civil Engineering department makes no training available on their use. Mechanical and Aerospace makes classes available, but it is extremely difficult to get into these classes from outside of the department, and their classes (MAE 94) don't count towards our technical breadth requirements.

We discussed the option of offering a single class that spends two to three weeks on each of a series of programs, providing a basic knowledge of each. We suggested the option of offering 2 unit seminars on these programs (similar to CEE 15 for Matlab), and offering official seminars on the programs, similar to the Matlab workshops already offered.

Interpersonal Skills in Classes

We believe that there is a lack of emphasis on public speaking and communication in most classes. Too often, students don't interact at all during lectures or discussions. We discussed ways to increase participation and practice technical communication. Several ideas we formulated were increased frequency of technical presentations paired with reports and the possibility of a technical communications class

being brought back (previously CEE 105). Another way to increase student participation in class would be to have professors keep students engaged by calling upon them randomly to answer course related questions.

TAs/Discussion Usage

We discussed how to increase efficiency and usefulness of discussion sections. Multiple means were suggested, including providing tours of labs and discussion and presentation of research relevant to class topics (providing real examples of concept discussed in classes). Currently, TAs use sections to discuss examples and review homework problems. We believe this can be enhanced if TAs provide written handouts of the topics they discuss in order to focus the sections on discussion of class material rather than on copying down notes.

Availability of a forum for professors, TAs, and peers to discuss homeworks and concepts throughout the week was addressed. Setting up a Facebook group for a particular class was proposed as a solution for this as students rarely use the courseweb forum. This provides for quick answers to questions as well as participation of all students. This allows for professors, TAs, and peers to answer questions, and makes answers public to the entire class (avoiding repetition).

CEE 101/ Statics

It was mentioned during the focus group that during upper division classes it became apparent a number of students did not have a fully developed understanding of statics with respect to a civil engineering viewpoint. This would sometimes hold the class back if the professor was forced to spend lecture reviewing parts of statics as a result. We came up with two potential solutions for this. One would be for the department to take extra care in picking a very capable TA for CEE 101, and the other being collaborating with student groups to set up some sort of tutoring for introductory upper division courses, particularly CEE 101.

Professor Enthusiasm/ Interaction

We are very pleased with the enthusiasm of the civil department's enthusiasm for the major as well as its collective concern for student learning. As students we believe it is important that our professors know that we appreciate this and value it very highly as undergraduates at UCLA.

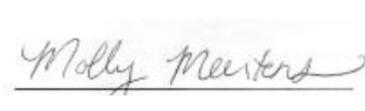
We hope that this report will serve to aid the faculty in their departmental self assessment.

Ryan Vanderlip, CEE13



Ryan Vanderlip

Molly Meertens, CEE13



Molly Meertens

Justin Maynard, CEE12



Justin M.