MEMORANDUM
August 31, 2009

To: Dean Fred Hartmeister

From: Jharna Chaudhuri, Chair, Department of Mechanical Engineering

Subject: Graduate Program Review Response

The College of Engineering and the Department of Mechanical Engineering thank the Graduate Program Review committee for their thorough review of our graduate programs and their constructive comments. We also acknowledge the Graduate School Deans who arranged this review. This letter comprises our response to the final report, as well as action plans. We have found the suggestions insightful and have carefully considered them in our planning. Our response is grouped in the same five categories as used in the review report and is intended to mainly emphasize the action items.

Program Overview and Vision:
(Rating: Good)

1. Develop a five-year strategic plan
   The Mechanical Engineering department is working on a new strategic plan. The chair appointed a committee in spring, 09, and is working with this committee. The committee continued meeting during the spring and summer semesters to make a preliminary plan, and it will be brought to the faculty through a series of faculty meetings during the 2009 fall semester for discussion, modification and adoption. The strategic plan will be completed by December, 2009, and implemented January, 2010. The new strategic plan will be aligned along the College of Engineering as well as Texas Tech’s strategic plan. The plan includes the mission, vision, goals, strategies and bench marks.

Faculty Productivity:
(Rating: Good)

1. Encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative research on campus
Many faculty in the department collaborate with other faculty in the department as well as from colleges of engineering, arts and sciences, and education, and HSC. The faculty will continue and expand on interdisciplinary research activities.

2. **Even distribution of graduate student advising among faculty**
   The department will look into how to evenly distribute the graduate students among faculty instead of only few faculty advising majority of graduate students.

3. **Establish a variable teaching load policy**
   A variable faculty teaching load has been already instituted to encourage research incentive faculty to spend more time on research and proposal writing.

4. **Recruit excellent faculty with competitive start up package**
   Eight new faculty (seven Assistant Professors and one Endowed Chair) were hired in last five years (some replacement and some new positions) in the ME department. All of them were excellent hires with a competitive start up package. The department will continue hiring excellent faculty most probably at higher ranks in future.

5. **Seek opportunities to establish Endowed Chairs in Mechanical Engineering**
   We wish to have more Endowed Chair positions in the department.

**Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates:**
(Rating: Satisfactory)

1. **Recruit high quality graduate students with more emphasis on Ph. D. students recruitment**
   The department will work with the college and use a national recruiting strategy to hire high quality Ph. D. and MS students. The department is already recruiting students with high caliber directly into the Ph. D. program and we will continue this trend. We currently have 120 graduate students with 50% or 60 students being Ph. D. students. We like to increase this ratio further and have more Ph. D. and less MS students. The department will continue inviting and bringing prospective students for on campus visits.

**Curriculum and Program of Study:**
(Rating: Satisfactory)

1. **Prepare a Graduate Handbook both in electronic and hard copy format**
   The department will prepare a graduate Handbook and distribute by December, 2009.

2. **Institute a Ph. D. preliminary examination**
   An early preliminary examination will be established for the Ph. D. program. The content of the Ph. D. examination will be discussed by the faculty and will be finalized by December, 2009. The preliminary examination will be given to all Ph. D. students at the end of their first year of study.

3. **Provide competitive financial support to graduate students**
   The department would like to provide 100% competitive financial support in terms of RA and TA to graduate students. The Presidential Fellowships, Dean’s Fellowships and
scholarships from the Graduate School certainly help to fulfill this mission and we hope that this trend will continue.

Facilities and Resources:
(Rating: Satisfactory)

1. **Seek additional space for faculty and graduate student offices and research laboratories**
   The Mechanical Engineering department is expanding and needs more faculty and graduate student office spaces and research laboratory spaces. Currently, the college is doing a space inventory to assess the utilization of current space and need for future space.

The aim of the Mechanical Engineering department at Texas Tech University is to have an excellent graduate and research program. We believe that we can achieve this goal. The department will incorporate most of the recommendations given by the graduate program review committee as mentioned in the action items.

Interim Dean Jon Strauss

Signature

8/31/09

Date

Cc: Provost Robert Smith