Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo
Computer Engineering, MS

The 2018-2019 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Computer Engineering, MS program concluded with a culmination meeting on March 27, 2020.

The following people attended the meeting: Pamella Oliver (Provost), Mark Filowitz (AVP of Academic Programs, AVPAP), Susamma Barua (Dean, ECS), Sang June Oh (Associate Dean, ECS), Kiran George (Chair), and Su Swarat (Assistant VP for Institutional Effectiveness).

The Provost started the meeting by providing a general overview of the PPR process. She commended the program and the college for the following accomplishments:

- High quality graduate program that prepares students to meet industry workforce needs and for advanced studies.
- Well-structured curriculum that offers considerable flexibility.
- Full-time faculty teach most of the courses, and care deeply about teaching.
- Faculty incorporate hands-on activities in the classroom to help students master the fundamentals and build a solid foundation in computer engineering.
- Small class sizes allow students to get sufficient attention and guidance from faculty.
- Students feel comfortable approaching faculty outside of class, and have ample opportunities to partner with faculty on research.
- Faculty are research active, highly productive, and represent a diverse range of expertise.
- Dean's Office understands the dynamics, challenges, constraints and opportunities of the program, and provides support appropriately.

Major recommendations and issues raised through the PPR process were discussed as follows:

1. Student options to complete a project or thesis:
   - The external reviewers recommended the program to encourage more students to opt to complete a project or thesis to fulfill graduation requirement as opposed to taking the comprehensive exam.
   - The Chair agreed, citing a low percentage (5% or less) of students who currently take the project or thesis options.
   - The Provost acknowledged the additional work for faculty if more students take the project or thesis options, but recommended the program to engage more students in these options as they better help prepare the students for employment.

2. Curriculum diversification:
   - The external reviewers recommended the program to consider diversifying the core curriculum beyond IC design, as well as creating multiple tracks/pathways based on faculty expertise and industry demands.
   - The AVPAP asked the program to work with the Office of Academic Programs to ensure that the curriculum expansion follows appropriate policies and procedures.

3. Corporate partners program for graduate students:

- The external reviewers recommended the program to create corporate sponsorships where students work on projects for a specific company.
- The Dean concurred, and asked the program to collaborate with the College Development Team to secure industry-sponsored projects through the ECS Corporate Partners Program.
- The Chair agreed that, in comparison to undergraduate students in the department, graduate students do not have enough industry level projects. Most of the corporate partnership projects are prioritized to fulfill seniors' capstone requirement. The program would like to start the conversation to seek similar opportunities for graduate students.

The Dean praised the program as one of the best in ECS. She especially appreciates the enthusiasm of program faculty to collaborate with colleagues from other departments on research proposals and other projects. The provost concluded the meeting by commending the Chair for his excellent leadership, and thanking the faculty for their hard work.