Provost’s News

Welcome back to all faculty, students, and staff as we start another new semester and another new calendar year. For each of us, a new semester is an ideal time to consider the opportunities and challenges that the new year brings. From a faculty perspective, this is typically focused on students who will be taught and advised, changes in class delivery, proposals that will be written, research projects that are underway and how to move them along, and of course departmental, institutional, and professional service. For the administration those “opportunities and challenges” run the gamut from the mundane but necessary calendar of events that keep the institution running (see the Academic Affairs calendar) to anticipating and responding to external forces that continue to shape higher education.

A January 2015 article in University Business Magazine considered these “opportunities and challenges” from the perspective of sound bite-sized thoughts from a range of college administrators. While there is a bit of “something for everyone” within this article, there are two items that stood out to me as important to Mines. The article notes that “well over half of the nonprofit private colleges failed to meet either enrollment targets or revenue targets in the fall of 2014.” For Mines, we had the opposite problem with a bumper crop of incoming freshmen and transfer students. While we know that this created strain in entry and gateway courses, it is a much better problem to have than that experienced by institutions with revenue shortfalls. We are well into the admission cycle for fall 2015 and the admissions office reports continued strong demand for seats at the school and yet again improved academic quality in the fall 2015 admitted class. As we get closer to national declaration day (May 1) we will keep the campus informed regarding our forecasts of the incoming class in terms of quality and size.

A second thread that was present in this article was the continued march to include more technology in all of our classes. The student of today is more “tech-savvy” and simply expects technology to be a natural part of his or her learning environment. This can be online materials, clickers, or very well integrated flipped delivery of courses with technology as an enabler. Regardless, the expectation increasingly is that this is a part of what all universities provide. Our recognition that Mines needed to invest more strongly and support faculty in this area led to the formation of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. The search for the new director of this center is currently underway and we hope to sponsor activities under the auspices of this center during the coming spring semester. As with admissions, we will keep the campus informed as this effort progresses.

So, once again welcome to the new year and thanks to all faculty, students, and staff for all that you do for Mines.
Faculty Achievements

Ning Wu, Colorado School of Mines Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering Assistant Professor, has received a 2015 NSF CAREER Award for his research “In- and Out-of-Equilibrium Behavior of Colloidal Clusters with Broken Symmetries” (Read more).

Aaron Stebner, Colorado School of Mines Department of Mechanical Engineering Assistant Professor, has received a 2015 NSF CAREER Award for his research “In-situ Advancements for Study of Multi-axial Micromechanics of Solid Materials” (Read more).

Mines by the Numbers

2014-2015 Academic Faculty Searches

As we continue to build our faculty, we are supporting 35 active searches in 2014-2015 academic year. This includes 25 Tenure/Tenure Track (T/TT) and 10 Teaching Faculty (TF) positions. To date, seven of those searches have been completed successfully.

What’s Happening

CCIT Update:

Mike Erickson joined Mines as Chief Information Officer (CIO) in September 2014 and has had a productive fall semester. His overall goal is to ensure CCIT is empowering the Mines community through outstanding technology infrastructure and engaged, service-oriented technology support.

A few highlights from the fall:

- In response to student demand, the CTLM main computer lab is now available 24 hours per day, with “after hours” access via BlasterCard.
- The High Performance Computing team showcased Mine’s HPC-based research at the international conference “SuperComputing14” to over 8,000 attendees.
- The Help Desk surpassed a milestone of 85,000 “issues resolved” since it began tracking requests in 2006.
- The Enterprise Systems team continued its support for administrative software projects such as Travel & Expense Management, the Cayuse Research Suite, and more.
Exciting initiatives are on the horizon, including:

- A new licensing agreement to provide Mines' students and staff the latest Microsoft Office products at no cost to them (more details will be available later in the spring).
- A fresh look at the services CCIT provides such as support for learning technologies and Mines' "mobile presence".
- A more automated, robust and flexible identity management system (for account/password creation and maintenance).
- Migration to the robust Cognos Business Intelligence / Reporting Tool to provide improved access to institutional data.

Always feel free to reach out to CCIT at the Mines' Help Desk at [http://helpdesk.mines.edu](http://helpdesk.mines.edu), or to [Mike Frickson, CIO](mailto:helpdesk@mines.edu).

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**Mines' Values**

*A student-centered institution focused on education that promotes collaboration, integrity, perseverance, creativity, life-long learning, and a responsibility for developing a better world*

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