IAB Member Feedback Summary

(Note that some IAB members had left or were not present for final feedback session.)

(The gentleman with the white hair sitting to the left of Gregory Davis): Kind of the same today as it were 20 years ago, and you may call a lot of the applications by different names but if you have the fundamentals, they can be challenges, goals, any endeavors and that’s the thing that we value, at least what we look for when we hire them. We hire them for the fundamentals not what is their dissertation, they say they have a course load, and what was included in that course load.

Davis, Gregory: Um, well, all that goes in a sense here. I would just put a slight wrinkle on it. I think we certainly value fundamentals. We also value a little bit of breadth in the technical instance, to the extent that this came up in the curriculum discussion we had the option to take you know technical… Um, I don’t think that’s necessarily… I certainly wouldn’t want to see that trade in ethics or communications or quote unquote softer subject matters which probably I think should go outside the engineering field anyway, that we should push those back in my opinion to general studies. That’s social communication in my opinion, that’s just as essential to anybody here. Why should the engineering culture take it upon themselves to do that? So I would say yes, concentrate on the fundamentals, options for breadth I think would be a good thing.

Marner, Webb: Got a couple of comments. Um I essentially agree. You know Peter _____ said a lot of important things and he passed away you know just a few months ago but one of the things he said was, focus on your strengths, find out what your strengths are and focus on those. You will always have shortcomings that you cannot deal with the way you’d like so focus on your strengths and if I look at your curve Tom, you know this 100% on down and the left 50% was kind of on the fundamentals was high at 80% or higher and the right side was some of application there as you were commenting was ethics and that type of thing. Actually I don’t think those are that bad, 60%, the lowest was 60%! Maybe its kind of a paradox but, there was this thing about too many lectures on tenured faculty teaching classes, but yet I think in a lot of those classes, I know certainly I do they will hit on those topics you know on a regular basis as a part of the courses and then the last point I’d make, that option of the three technical courses being out of your dept I don’t know I guess I agree with Greg, some diversity here, generality is very important, and I think this would give you that option but I think I would be in favor of making it an option. There may be some students who want to focus on one of the engineering disciplines; mechanical or aerospace engineer especially students that have been…

(The gentleman in his 30s sitting between Shawn Phillips and John Armenian): I think I’m going to echo what Sin said so far in terms of the fundamentals, I have less of a systems engineering background and more of a design background and we can pretty well screen out the communication skills and other things in the interview but the fundamentals are something that’s a bit difficult to assess and harder to teach so I vote again for the depth and less for the narrowing the depth. Also the optional option sounds
appropriate but not the required. The only other comment I had was on student projects. When I was here several years ago it seemed it was kind of lip-service giving student projects. It appears student projects are in much better shape I think if faculty can spend more time. I know the civil department actually would have picnics, a faculty member would have a dinner, and they have a barbecue and everyone would come over, and it just fostered the spirit of camaraderie. It didn’t seem to be around with this department in the undergraduate population.

Armenian, John: I concur with these views and about communications and some of these interpersonal skills. If the 6 student briefers are a good sample Tom, then you know they’re pretty good briefers, they’re not shy about standing up and discussing their ideas and projects and so on. So they’ve got it made so let’s just stick with the fundamentals and I know they do a good job there too.

Murry, Roger: I had a couple thoughts. The minor notion goes back to the gentlemen engineering degree as it used to be here in the old days. You weren’t called to mechanical engineering, you were just called to a general engineering degree and the vision there was that you would go to graduate school and round out some specialty. As far as what’s better for someone who’s not going to go on for a graduate degree, it seems like what we’re doing now, is probably preparing, what you’re doing now probably prepares that person better to be a mechanical engineer in the industry. I appreciate having to take a look into magnetics and all that stuff later but not at the time so… and I love the growth. It seems like a very challenging task to take on to bring young faculty in and give them resources to succeed and that’s what your doing and to me that’s not a metric, that’s just a great vision and it seems like the other things will just follow so there you go as far as I’m concerned.

(The gentleman with the white hair sitting to the right of Roger Murry): Yeah, I’ll make a comment. I think you’re strategic plan is good. It’s good to have that vision out there on where you want to go. I understand that the focus on graduate BMS and PH.D is for a research university like UCLA, that’s really the focus at kind of the expense of the undergraduate, not really wanting to grow the undergraduate program and I think we talked a little bit about there’s a lot of data out there that shows there’s not going to be enough science and engineers in the US before too many years so you know if not a school like UCLA, some schools are really going to concentrate on undergraduate, decide to get more of the masses out there too I think from the standpoint of just creating enough engineers for the demand as the aging workforce starts to fall off. I don’t think that necessarily has to be the focus here but I worry a little bit about all of the strategic vision and focus being in the graduate area and not a lot of attention to the undergraduate area from that standpoint trying to grow out.

Hatakeyama, Jason: You have a lot of tension in terms of the different things you’re wrestling with but I’d be displeased if you didn’t have all that tension. I think you’d be missing a lot of the top issues that are basin-ing so I think its good you have this all out in the open, you’re addressing them, you’re having dialogue and you’re doing you’re duty, not buckling under unnecessarily, you’re pushing back where you need to and you’re
questioning the data so that you’re not making poor decisions unnecessarily. Um, we’ve hired a lot of recent graduates, some of them were project team leads or project team members that we’ve seen in the last couple of years and they’re dynamite people. They’re quite intelligent, and they’ve got a lot of those other characteristics as well so the fundamentals are certainly working, but we hire them because of their competitive discriminators and those are those other things so we’re definitely going to weed out the ones who don’t have them. I don’t know whether you take the time to prepare them or not but Darwinian selection will get rid of those who don’t have it eventually, but from an industry standpoint, we face a lot of challenges too, so we’re constantly making very similar decisions and questions about where our workforce is headed and how to bring in a whole new crop of people. We’re facing probably 40% of our workforce being eligible for retirement in 5 years and it’s a lot of challenges and the system engineering issue, the detail, you know as we’ve moved up the value chain, that doesn’t mean that people designing are going away, it just means that a lot of the people here in Southern California aren’t doing that anymore so the last couple of years we’ve talked a little bit about creating a center of gravity that at one time literally was here in Southern California for aerospace anyway and we’ve lost a lot of that. A lot of the work has gone outside of this area so in terms of this institute, ways of collaborating more effectively as a regional powerhouse. We have all the elements, we have finances, we have the airports, we have big industry, small industry, we have academia, we have semi-conductors, we have suppliers, we have decision signs, we have all the various elements to really be a huge powerhouse in this area but we don’t lobby as a unit, we don’t represent ourselves as a region, we’re all kind of going out for the paths individually. Ohio does an extraordinary job of pooling their resources, making the money…just one tight community and you won’t ever go away so that’s what I was hoping that this group could help foster, would be some sort of attention toward that.

Phillips, Shawn: That part was really important. We start looking at Congressional ads for the Los Angeles Valley. I don’t mean to discuss for breaking ground next year, its so difficult for the aerospace industry because of who’s in office etc. We have things up north; we’ve gotten things like Kelly Springston. We got a 25 million dollar congressional ad from Thomas’ office. There’s things like that, but, so that’s a key way to get in but we do have issues on how we work that because of our representatives. I’m not saying I’m republican so don’t jump into that thing. I’m just saying that’s a target thing that I think we must discuss at some time. That’s one of the things I view down here, how do we leverage as an industry, a government industry, the resources we have, the capabilities and how can UCLA leverage it? A lot of it comes down to congressional dollars. In terms of a new Aerospace institute or anything else like that, its going to be a really hard fought battle to get that, but to team up would help so I like that. Industry bringing in the fact that they would support a congressional ad for a aerospace institute or some new initiative to UCLA even though we’re not supposed to talk to the congress people, that’s illegal. We have 3 people we deal with, congressional staffers, directly on congressional ads for …Valley which actually does come down into this area. Wouldn’t it be funny that way but I want to see it put into the university to foster something not for my selfish need of hiring new people but for aerospace industry. I think what I would like
to see and I talked about this in the past is some way to get congressional ads into UCLA for that and it seems like they’re opening the door. UCLA is finally realizing that it’s stupid to shut their schools off from congressional ads. They want to be involved now, so it kind of changes. I think it’s an opportunity to go in there and maybe try to develop an institute of excellence or whatever you want to call it, type of center. There’s all kinds of opportunities. That’s all I was saying.

Rhodes, Carl: So, you know, the one thing I see is that you have a big opportunity with that kind of growth in faculty and your graduate programs that you’re talking about; and what areas you’re going to invest in is going to be a really key decision, and I see you have a fundamental choice to make. You invest in nano and bio--which there was a significant portion listed in terms of your strategic plan--or you invest in other areas. You invest in nano and bio you might be fighting those top schools to get those people. So it might be worth looking at other areas, potentially, where you could attract the top people here and start a really good program in some special area where you could get the top people here and not have to fight with the MIT’s and other places in the world, and build up. I mean, it seems like Fluid Dynamics Systems and Controls are two areas we are getting a lot of good applications and good students. Maybe that’s a place to look at in terms of building up more, and building up expertise there, rather than chasing those areas that look good now, but ten years from now might not look as good; just something to think about. Other than that, it seems like things are looking really good.