



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

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Date: November 12, 2013

To: Dr. R. M. Unnikrishnan, Dean
College of Engineering and Computer Science

Cc: Dr. Dennis Derickson (Team Chair)
Dr. Goran Matijasevic
Dr. Barry Pasternack

From: Mo Shiva, Chair, *M. Shiva*
Electrical Engineering Department

Subject: Written Response to the PPR Visiting Team's Report by the Department

The Program Performance Review (PPR) report was made available to the Electrical Engineering (EE) Department on October 30, 2013, via an email from the dean, with directions to provide him with a written response to the report. I would like to address the following issues related to the report:

1) Page 9 of the report has the following statement

In reference to the Chair:

"... He seemed, however, **somewhat ignorant of campus and system policies [emphasis added]**. For example, the program allows students to take up to half their coursework in 400 level courses. The campus UPS policy (UPS 410.106 section I E – see <http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/400/UPS410-106.pdf>) states that this is permitted, but a program needs to justify allowing more than 30% of course work to be done at the 400 level. **The team asked the Chair to prepare a justification as this is required as part of the PPR process [emphasis added]**. This was not provided. Also with regard to the 400 level courses, graduate students must do additional work beyond that required of undergraduate students (see UPS 411.100 section VI C - http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/400/UPS411.100_effec_1-28-13_pg9_revised_link_to-UPS320.020.pdf). When asked if this was being carried out, the Chair indicated that it was up to the faculty member teaching the course and it was not always the case. The Chair indicated that he is only an academic year chair, with no support during the summer. **It is not apparent to the Review Team that this is a valid reason for not following campus and system policies [emphasis added]**."

Stating that the Chair is "somewhat ignorant of campus and system policies" is appalling, insulting, and untrue. I have been a member of the EE faculty since 1982 and the elected chair of the EE Department since 2001 without even a single case of UPS violation on my record.

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Also, I presume the comment, i.e., **“The team asked the Chair to prepare a justification as this is required as part of the PPR process,”** refers to question number 25 on page 27 of the report, apparently asked by the CSUF member of the team. However, the question is worded as: **“Justification for keeping the program at a minimum of 15 units of 500 level coursework** should be provided in the PPR process (see UPS 410.106 I. B. 3).” To me, the question was asking why we have placed a minimum on the number of courses, and I replied to the question accordingly (please see my answer on page 27 of the report.) As I mentioned in my comments, some universities do not have a minimum on the number of 500-level courses; we believe at least half of the MS courses should be taken at the higher 500-level courses.

During the meeting with the visiting team (**Dr. Derickson was not present, Dr. Pasrernack was present during the entire time, and Dr. Matijasevic was present during a part of the meeting**) on May 14, 2013, from 3:00 to 3:30 PM, I was told by Dr. Pasternack that what was meant by the abovementioned question was not exactly what the question stated. Instead, the question sought a justification for why we do not require 70% of the courses to be at 500-level (per UPS 410-106). I described that:

1. The question was never brought up in any of the meetings held by university officials regarding the PPR process. It is not mentioned in UPS 410.200 (PPR Policy), it was not among the guidelines provided by the dean, and in fact this was the first time in my 31 year tenure at CSUF that I was hearing about it.
2. **However, I provided the following justifications for letting students include up to five 400-level courses** in their MSEE program:
 - MSEE courses are at a much higher level compared to those taken in undergraduate programs and most subjects cannot be covered in a single 500-level course. As such, they have prerequisite courses that are offered as 400-level courses.
 - I used the two courses that I teach as examples, EE-420 (Introduction to digital filters) and EE-518 (Digital signal processing). The subjects are commonly included in a single textbook related to advanced topics in Digital Signal Processing. The first half of the text is used in the first course and the second half in the second course.
 - As such, most of our 500-level courses need prerequisites as a 400-level course and that is the main reason for letting students take a maximum of five 400-level courses in their program. In fact, our MSEE brochure clearly shows that out of the Twenty Five (25) 500-level courses, twenty one (21) require a 400-level (or in some cases another 500-level) course as a prerequisite.
 - The university does not have 600-level designation for courses; otherwise, we could offer some of these courses as 600-level, with a 500-level prerequisite course.
 - Many of the 400-level courses include advanced topics and are rarely approved as Technical Electives for undergraduate students; hence, they are practically only available to graduate students.

Regarding the requirement for graduate students in 400-level courses to do extra work beyond that required for undergraduate students, I stated:

- It is a UPS requirement that the faculty is well aware of.
- The EE Office does not get involved in micromanagement of the content of the courses taught by faculty.
- Even if we desire to do the micromanagement of the courses, the personnel needed for the process does not exist.
- I also added that some faculty members are of the opinion that the majority of our 400 level technical elective courses are taken primarily by graduate students and consequently present extensive graduate level material with significantly more work required by the students than normally required for undergraduates. One of the reasons that these courses have a 400 level designation is to allow capable undergraduate the opportunity to take them. To comply with the statement that the graduate students should do more work requires that the undergraduates should be given less work. This would be unfair to the undergraduate students since it would not only degrade their education but would also reduce their chances of earning a good grade. This had nothing to do with **ignoring**, monitoring, or enforcing the UPS policy. It was just a statement that I had heard from the faculty several times in the past.

Regarding the comment, “The Chair indicated that he is only an academic year chair, with no support during the summer. It is not apparent to the Review Team that this is a valid reason for not following campus and system policies;”

This is taken completely out of the context of the conversation. I was asked about the teaching load of the chair, and I described that the chair positions in ECS are all for academic-year; as such, chairs are required to teach a minimum of two courses per semester. I added that, with many of the responsibilities that previously were handled by the university and dean’s office moved to the departments in recent years and the fact that chairs are not regular employees during summer, it is becoming very difficult for the chairs to take care of the department matters while teaching two courses per semester. **This absolutely had nothing to do with following UPS as indicated on page 9 of the report.**

As I said before, what is included on page 9 of the report is appalling, insulting, degrading, and completely unprovoked. It seems like my dear CSUF colleague, Dr. Pasternack, has included these remarks in the report, rather than reporting to the visiting team the above mentioned answers to the questions raised.

By copy of this letter to the team chair, Dr. Derickson, I am kindly requesting him to find out the reasons Dr. Parternack has chosen to ignore all my answers to his questions and instead has included the comments listed on page 9.

2) Terminal Evaluation Option (and lack of a Thesis example!)

There are a couple of issues to be addressed regarding the terminal evaluation:

As I have informed the committee before, terminal evaluation can be done using one of the following options:

1. Oral Examination
2. Project
3. Thesis

The choice is made by the student, not the faculty. The most common choice is the oral exam. Students firmly believe that the oral exams taken over **ten courses** will well prepare them for their upcoming job interviews. Thesis is usually selected by the students who plan to continue with their education and work toward their Ph.D. degrees.

There are several references to the final oral examination and the lack of a thesis report (e.g., see second paragraph on page 15 of the report). **However, one of the documents that I provided to the visiting team was an 87-page long thesis** by Mr. Saud Saeed, titled: "A NEW RECONFIGURABLE MEANDER LINE ANTENNA FOR WIRELESS COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS." **Additionally, I included an unsolicited email from the student to me appreciating what he learned in my courses and thanking me for my support, and stating that he was doing very well in his Ph.D. program at Arizona State University.**

I am attaching the cover page of the thesis and the student's email for your perusal, **and I am wondering how the thesis was not noticed or seen among the samples that I provided to the visiting committee.**

By copy of this letter to the team chair, Dr. Derickson, I am kindly requesting him to investigate the disappearing of an 87-page long thesis.