

February 4, 2022

Alexander Wolf, Dean
Baskin School of Engineering

RE: Baskin School of Engineering Professional School Proposal

Dear Alex,

The Committees on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA), Educational Policy (CEP), Planning and Budget (CPB), Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections (RJE), Graduate Council (GC), and the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) have undertaken review of the Baskin School of Engineering Professional School Proposal. We appreciate the time dedicated to prepare this proposal for Academic Senate review and appreciate your patience as the review period spanned the winter holiday break.

To begin, multiple committees remarked that the proposal lacked crucial specifics related to the committees' purviews, and several committees offered questions and suggestions which may help you shape a revised proposal that addresses these necessary points. Although we understand that you are anxious to move these "professionalization" measures forward, the proposal implies sweeping changes to the management of the Baskin School at variance with the campus' academic divisions, and the Senate is primarily concerned with ensuring that proper considerations are taken, and that we minimize the ambiguity in policy and the impacts (known and unforeseen) on administrative units. We briefly highlight some of the significant issues raised below, but would like to draw your attention to the specifics of each committees' individual correspondence as well. These are appended for your review.

Diversity

Several committees were deeply interested in the proposal's centering of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) issues as these pertain to BSOE and the larger campus's priorities and initiatives aimed at student success. However, CAAD and CEP both remarked that without BSOE's identifying and defining the specific frameworks and programs, it was challenging to see how the professional school would implement and achieve these goals. CAAD recommends that "[t]o better understand the proposal, we strongly recommend that 'diversity' is clearly articulated and defined. We suggest referencing the DEI efforts at other UC Engineering schools that not only are exemplars in their DEI work, but are highly ranked Engineering Programs. We recommend contextualizing the proposal in existing research on engineering education/admissions. Some examples are briefly summarized here:

<https://diversityrecognition.asee.org/resources/>."

CEP further supports this when they remarked, "there is a lack of clear vision and specifics regarding how BSOE will address under-represented students, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), first generation and female-identifying students." GC also noted the proposal's lack of guiding principles when they point out, "But there does not seem to be a larger vision here of why these changes are important beyond procedural efficiencies and what BSOE's

future as “a true engineering school” might look like, especially in terms of graduate education. Knowing that might help us understand what these current proposed changes and potential (but not yet identified) changes to graduate programs would entail and their possible effects (financial, programmatic, relationships to other units on campus, etc.).”

Admissions

CAAD, CAFA, CEP and CPB communicated a deep interest in how BSOE would improve admissions as related to diversity, including gender, in the admissions process. CAFA notes, “We are in particular very interested in what ideas come out of Engineering’s relationships with professional societies and other engineering schools, in terms of ways to diversify the application, admission, and enrollment pools of prospective students in their majors.” Similarly, CAAD raises further questions. They ask, “With regard to admissions, since CAFA does not include gender as part of a metric for their holistic review, how will this be addressed in the admissions process? How will a transition to direct admission be assessed in the years to come?” Members were particularly interested in BSOE’s specific plans for outreach that would be established, and how they would differ from current Office of Admissions processes.

In addition to admissions, committee members expressed a desire for the inclusion of more data specifically around issues of retention and student success. CEP stated, “A higher percentage of students are entering BSOE than are retained by BSOE, which this proposal fails to mention. In light of this, we would like to know more about how the BSOE will work to create a climate to recruit and retain underrepresented, first-generation, low socioeconomic students.” Similarly, CAAD remarked, “We firmly believe that in order to recruit a more diverse and successful cohort of students, BSOE needs to have retention programs to help provide a more holistic system of support.” CPB agreed in their response, “BSOE’s unanticipated level of growth over the past several decades, and the reality that School is disciplinarily positioned to drive potentially substantial enrollment growth over the foreseeable future, requires us to think strategically about the broader campus impacts and resource implications in the near and longer term.” Committees encourage BSOE to provide a more detailed explanation of retention and student success plans, efforts and the committed resources dedicated to this.

Furthermore, questions arose regarding admissions into BSOE and how students that aren’t successful in their major would migrate to other BSOE majors or potentially into other divisions. CAFA asserts, “BSOE should clarify whether students will be admitted directly into specific majors, and automatically declared there, or into the school as a whole, where their eventual status will be determined by how they perform in courses required for declaration.” CEP expands on CAFA’s concerns by asking, “Most BSOE majors do not have much overlap with majors outside of BSOE; currently, the majority of BSOE proposed majors who fail to qualify leave UC Santa Cruz which hurts UC Santa Cruz as a whole especially in the case of losing URM students. How will that be improved if BSOE becomes a professional school? If a student does not succeed in fulfilling major qualifications, will they be disqualified from BSOE? Will BSOE develop secondary majors to which students may be diverted within the school?” CPB further suggests, “The proposal would be strengthened by including data/evidence supporting the proposed changes and their perceived benefits. For example, how/why would it be easier for undergraduate students to move between BSOE majors, as stated in the proposal?”

With regards to the current enrollment management plans (impaction), CEP members remarked, “if the BSOE proposal is approved, the admission targets for [Computer Science and Engineering (CSE)]—or any other future impacted programs—would still not be set within BSOE.” What is the plan for mitigating the current status of CSE impaction? CAFA also seeks clarification when referring to Enrollment Management and asks for it to be included in any future proposals. CPB echoes this concern about, “BSOE gaining greater influence/control of undergraduate admissions without a comprehensive enrollment management plan in place. In other words, any discussion of admissions should be paired with a discussion of overall enrollment management.”

GC also underscores that the proposal largely pertains to undergraduate education. However, they do wonder how the proposed undergraduate changes will impact graduate education. They further raise, “Does BSOE anticipate that any changes to the undergraduate admissions process might impact graduate education (e.g. TA needs and funding)? What are the resource implications of any impacts?”

Conferring Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees

CEP, GC and RJ&E would like more information about the proposal to sign and confer degrees and the justification for changing the current bylaws in [Chapters 1](#) and [2.3](#) in relation to [Standing Order of the Regents 110.3.b](#). GC notes that, “the request to expand the list of signatories seems appropriate for a professional school and relatively unproblematic. However, there are areas of the proposal that indicate potential future changes, and these are not sufficiently articulated to allow for Council to comment. Under what conditions might further changes be sought? What would be the rationale for these changes? What might be the resource implications of such changes?” Similarly, RJ&E “wonders how these would alter BSOE students’ relationship to the colleges, as well as to the campus’ general education requirements. For instance, would the proposed changes allow BSOE to recommend a student for a degree even if the student had not fulfilled their college-specific or general education course requirements?”

While the Senate is not concerned with approving the addition of the BSOE Dean’s signature on the diplomas of Baskin School UG student degrees, as you can see from the above and in the various committee responses, there are multiple downstream impacts and campus requirements which are unaddressed in the current proposal. While it is not possible for BSOE to answer all these questions for the campus, we do ask that additional consultation with the colleges, with the Senate to clarify UG requirements, and with the Graduate Division and Graduate Council take place before further updates to degree conferral take place in the future.

Impact on Campus

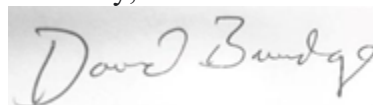
Several committees expressed some degree of reservation about the implications of this proposed change on campuswide enrollment management impacts and academic culture, as this would be a significant shift from the established college system and structure. RJ&E asked, “The documentation submitted for review indicates that the proposed changes facilitate the relationship between BSOE and the colleges, although it does not specify how this relationship would be facilitated. In addition, the proposal talks about the ability of students to migrate between majors in BSOE or between majors outside of BSOE into BSOE. However, it is our understanding that change of major is largely controlled by the departments already, and hence we did not see how

the proposed changes would make migration easier. Hence, RJE would have liked more clarity on specifically how the proposed changes will enable both of these outcomes.” Likewise, “CPB would appreciate attention to the access of non-engineering undergraduate students to BSOE courses: how would this be affected by the proposed changes?”

With this proposed change, CEP raises particular questions regarding the multiple impacts to the roles and responsibilities of College advising and other units on campus. They note, “Prior to commenting on your proposal, we need to better understand what exactly BSOE is proposing as related to: Pre-major and major-transition advising, Academic standing advising and probationary supervision, Time-to-degree monitoring and enforcement, Working with the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office on individual students’ academic progress appeals and aid eligibility, Withdrawal, leaves of absence, and readmission.” CPB’s response likewise recommends for the proposal to, “specify BSOE’s broader vision for balancing professional and academic programs within the UCSC environment.”

Once again, the Senate thanks you for your willingness to engage with us on your vision for the future of the Baskin School. Although this response may raise multiple layers of, in many cases, complex questions, the Senate’s highest priority is assisting you in providing the best professional school structure for your faculty and students, which will also mesh well with the existing campus structures and degree requirements. We look forward to engaging with you as you respond to our questions, or to revisions of this proposal. The Senate will also need to propose and approve legislation with updates to the Senate Bylaws and possibly Regulations to ensure conformance with the final proposal. Please address any inquiries regarding legislation to Senate Secretary Grant McGuire and Senate Director Mednick, who will work with you and appropriate Senate authorities on the content of these amendments. Any legislation before the Senate will require that background materials justifying the amendments be provided to the body. This may mean appending your final proposal, or any other materials you deem useful, to make the professionalization case to the faculty.

Sincerely,



David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate

Encl. Committee Bundle Responses

cc: Senate Executive Committee
Patty Gallagher, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Tracy Larrabee, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy

Melissa Caldwell, Chair, Graduate Council

Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

Ken Pedrotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections