Engineering Family Orientation

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Assistant Dean, Student Services
Agenda

- Goals of first year
- Curriculum
- Coping with Changes
- Student Support
- Role of Parents/Family
- Questions/Discussion
Goals of First-Year

• Become part of Cornell community
• Establish math / science foundation
• Learn about engineering
• Explore different majors
• Learn how to ask for help
• Become a sophomore
# Engineering Curriculum

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<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
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<td>Math</td>
<td>Physics/Chem/Bio</td>
<td>Major Requirements:</td>
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<td>Intro to</td>
<td>48 Credit Minimum</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Tech Writing</td>
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<td>Optional</td>
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Cornell Engineering
AP/GCE/IB Credit

- AP/GCE/IB credit means added flexibility
- May choose to accept or not accept credit
  - Work with faculty advisor
    - Confidence level in material
    - Take Cornell Advanced Standing Exams
      - Math, Chemistry, Computer Science
      - Physics – if no AP score
“Affiliation” with Major

- Middle to end of sophomore year
- Preparation and planning now
- Exploration encouraged
  - Intro to Engineering courses
  - Engineering 1050
    - Required to go to two major information sessions
  - “Got Major” presentation
- Student uncertainty about major
  - common, expected
What Do Faculty Expect?

- Students will come to class
- Work done on time
- Pace OK unless hear otherwise
- Will hear from students who have questions or problems
  - Students will take initiative
- Code of Academic Integrity will be followed
What Can Students Expect?

• Workload may feel reasonable at first
• Increased load over time
• Mental 

• First Prelims end of September
Wake up call
(sometimes)

Reality of the pace sets in
Early Intervention

- Safety net
- Faculty in core courses send grades to Advising Office
- Staff contact students with C or below in core courses
- Offer assistance and provide resources
What Can Parents/Family Expect?

Initially
• Love most of my classes
• Homework is easy
• Less work than I thought

As time goes by
• This is really hard
• I don’t know if I made the right choice
• Don’t like my roommate
Coping With Many Changes

- Environment
  - Urban to rural
  - Small to large school

- Homesickness
  - Want a home cooked meal
  - Miss you and/or siblings

- Social Setting
  - More (or less) diverse community

- Residence Hall Life
  - Sharing space
Demands on Students

- Self
- Peers
- Social Setting
- Dorm Life
- Homework
- Tests
- Labs
- Environment
- Grades
- Career Choice
- Family
- Faculty
Student Services

• Many professionals, but not one mind reader!
  – Engineering Advising
  – Engineering Learning Initiatives
  – Diversity Programs in Engineering
  – Engineering Career Center
  – Asst Dean, Student Services
  – Assoc Dean, UG Programs
Advising

• Faculty Advisors
  – Curriculum requirements
  – Guidance re majors, graduate study and career planning

• Professional Advising Staff
  – Supplement faculty advising
  – Emphasis on first and second year students

• Peer Advisors
  – Course enrollment
  – Student life
  – Role models
Cornell = Opportunity

- Undergraduate Research
- Student Project Teams
- Community Service
- Leadership Opportunities
- Student Organizations
- Athletics/Clubs/Intramurals
- Social Life

Can create challenges in decision making
The Role of Parents/Family

- Role in transition
  - Influence, not control
    - Can’t regulate their lives
    - Listen, raise questions, put them in touch with resources

- Mentor
  - Help student explore alternatives
  - Student takes responsibility for finding solutions
The Role of Parents/Family

• Be Supportive
  – Actively listen, ask open ended questions
  – Trust in your student’s decision making
  – Student is CEO of own college experience
  – “Oh Zone”
    • Oh, that sounds like a difficult situation; how will you handle that?
  – Help guide to resources
  – Send care packages
Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

• Students have right to:
  – Inspect records
  – Challenge incorrect information
  – Keep records private
    • Professor’s names, course schedules, grades

• Treated as legal adults
  – Responsibilities and privileges
  – Personal Decisions
    • Coursework, classes, social life, personal well-being
FERPA (continued)

• Parents/Legal Guardians may be notified
  – Best interests of student
    • Withdrawals
    • Good standing is at issue
    • Disciplinary probation

• If health or well-being of student is at risk, and known to us, you will be notified
Additional Resources

• University Family Guide

• Engineering Info for Families
  – www.engineering.cornell.edu/familyguide

• Engineering Undergraduate Handbook
  – www.engineering.cornell.edu/handbook

• Don’t Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money
  by Christine Shelhas-Miller, Helen Johnson
Summary

- Incredible opportunities here
- Big adjustment for student
- Curriculum challenging/stimulating
- Tons of resources and support
- Students should get involved
- Your most important role is to be supportive!