

# *Engineering Family Orientation*



*Miranda Swanson, Associate Dean for Student Services*

*Michael Thompson, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs*



# Agenda

- Goals of first year
- Curriculum
- Coping with Changes
- Student Support
- Role of Parents/Family
- Panel Discussion: Q&A



# 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

Freshman		Sophomore		Junior	Senior
Math				Major Requirements: 48 Credit Minimum Tech Writing Core Courses + Electives	
Physics/Chem/Bio					
Intro to Engineering	Intro to CS	Engineering Distribution			
Writing Seminars			Approved Electives		
Optional	Liberal Studies Distribution				

# *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
  - In other words, students will take initiative
- Will follow Code of Academic Integrity



# Academic Integrity

- All new students are required to watch a short film, “Cheating”.
- The Essential Student Guide is distributed and discussed in ENGRG 1050.
  - “Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others.
  - A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers.”

# How Can You Help?

- Continue to stress the importance of academic integrity, not only at Cornell but throughout their professional career
- Provide the broader perspective that values “learning” over “grades”, especially as they begin to struggle with the rigors of Cornell
- Recognize some of the “pressure points” that lead to poor decisions
- Poor time management; time pressure → seek shortcuts
  - requesting an extension is always an option (faculty dependent)
- Grade pressure
  - believing that a single mediocre grade will dash their hopes of an internship, or admission into a post graduate programs
  - fear of “letting down” their parents
- Lack of confidence in their own abilities.
- Ignorance about what is permitted and not permitted in specific classes

# *What Can Students Expect?*

- Workload may feel reasonable at first
- Increased load over time
- Mental **Stretch**
- 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
- Staff contact students with C or below in core courses
- Offer assistance and provide resources

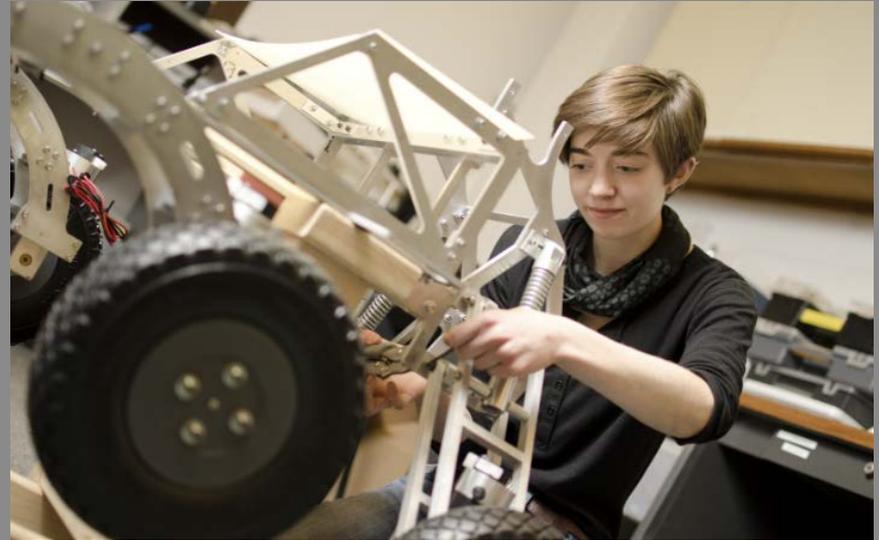
# *What Can Parents/Family Expect?*

## 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

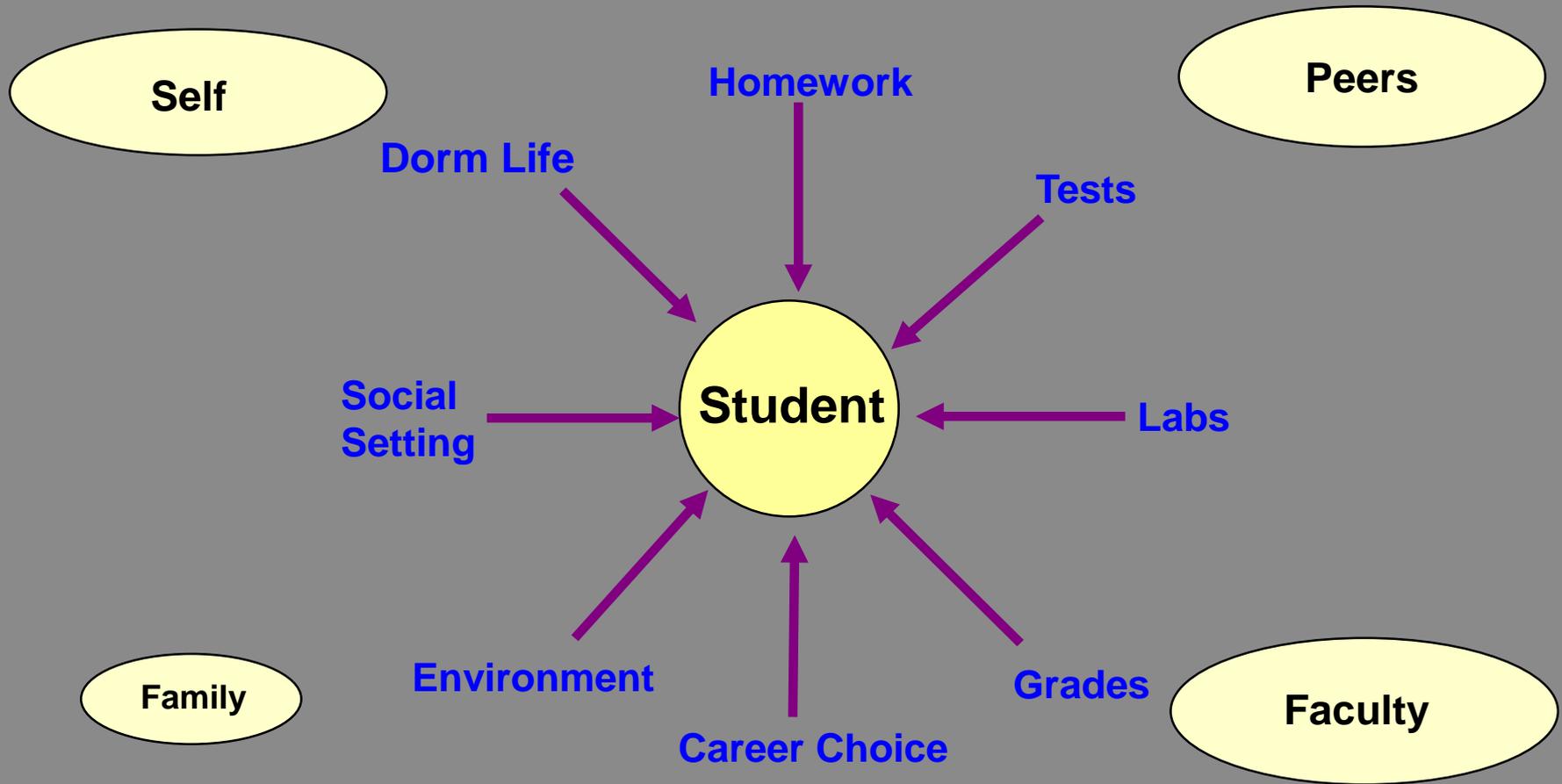


# *Coping With Many Changes*

- 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*



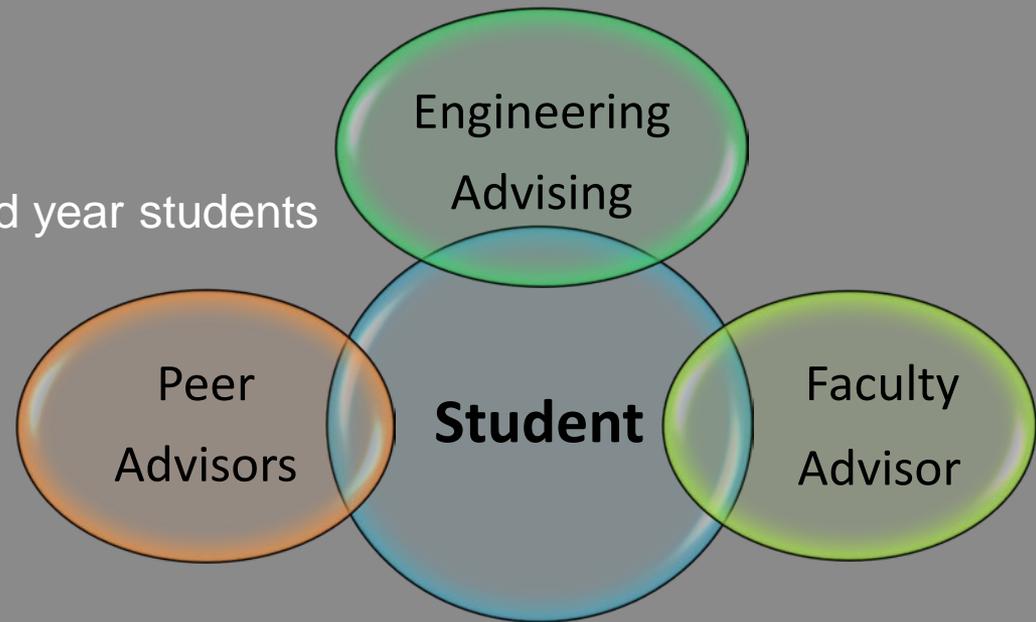
# *Student Services*

**Many professionals, but not one mind reader!**

- **Engineering Advising**
- **Diversity Programs in Engineering**
- **Engineering Learning Initiatives**
- **Engineering Career Center**
- **Associate Dean, Student Services**
- **Associate Dean, UnderGrad 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



# Health and Wellness

## Wellness

- Stress Management
  - Cornell Health
  - Empathy, Assistance and Referral Service (EARS)
  - Sports and Athletics, Fitness Centers, Outdoor Education
- Cornell United Religious Works

*parents.cornell.edu*

## Students in Distress

- Call Cornell Health at 607-255-5155. If urgent can be connected 24/7. If emergency, call Cornell Police.

# *Cornell = Opportunity*

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



Can create challenges for decision making  
(and time commitment)



# *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
- Become their MENTOR
  - Student takes responsibility for finding solutions (resist temptation to “fix” it)
  - Help student explore options and seek out resources
  - Encourage student to ask for help early



# *The Role of Parents/Family (continued)*

- 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?*

- Guide them to resources
- SEND CARE PACKAGES

# *Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)*

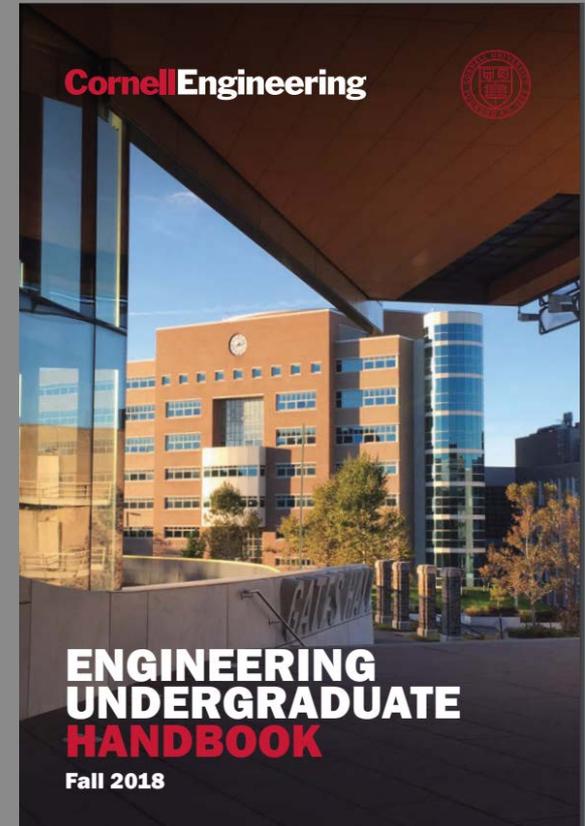
- Students have right to:
  - Inspect records
  - Challenge incorrect information
  - Keep records private
    - Professor's names, course schedules, grades
- Treated as legal adults
  - Responsibilities and privileges
  - Personal Decisions
    - Coursework, classes, social life, personal well-being

# *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
- [parents.cornell.edu](https://parents.cornell.edu)
- [www.engineering.cornell.edu](https://www.engineering.cornell.edu)
  - Engineering Info for Parents and Families
  - Engineering Undergraduate Handbook
- Don't Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money
  - by Christine Shelhas-Miller,  
and Helen Johnson



# *Summary*

- Big adjustment for student
- Curriculum challenging/stimulating
- Students should get involved but be selective
- Tons of resources and support
- Students must be proactive

Your support helps your student thrive!