Dean’s Welcome for Engineering Student Families

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J. Silbert Dean of Engineering
Engineering Family Orientation

Miranda Swanson, Associate Dean for Student Services
Michael Thompson, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs
Excited

Eager

Optimistic

Ready

Thrilled

Hopeful

Nervous

Anticipation
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:
  - Math
  - Physics/Chem/Bio
  - Intro to Engineering
  - Writing Seminars
- Sophomore:
  - Intro to CS
  - Engineering Distribution
- Junior:
  - Major Requirements:
    - 48 Credit Minimum
    - Tech Writing
    - Core Courses + Electives
- Senior:
  - Approved Electives
  - 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 (CASE)
      » Math, Chemistry, Computer Science
      » Physics – if no AP score
- Math is special! Greatest predictor of success in engineering
  - CASE exam can be used to further assess preparation / AP acceptance
“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 prepared
• will complete work on time
• will ask questions in class
• will comment if course pace not OK
• will talk with them if they have questions, concerns, or problems
• will follow Code of Academic Integrity

In other words, students will take the initiative
Academic Integrity

All freshmen required to watch a short film, “Cheating”

The Essential Student Guide distributed and discussed in first meeting with their advisors (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.
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

Self

Dorm Life

Homework

Tests

Labs

Grades

Career Choice

Environment

Social Setting

Family

Peers

Faculty
Keys to Success

• Ask for help

“If you learn anything at Cornell, please learn to ask for help. It is a sign of wisdom and strength.”
David Skorton, Recent Cornell President

• Keep up with work

• Seek out resources
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
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

• Become their Mentor
  • Help student explore alternatives
  • Student takes responsibility for finding solutions
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?
  
  • 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

• Family Guide (mailed to you this summer)
• parents.cornell.edu
• 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 need to be proactive

Your support helps your student thrive!
Panel

• Juan Gabriel Berrio, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering ‘20
• Alexa Gail Colinco, Biomedical Engineering ‘20
• Christa Downey, Director, Engineering Career Center
• Mark Lewis, Professor, Operations Research and Information Engineering
• Perrine Pepiot, Associate Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
• Jeffrey Varner, Professor, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
• Kelly Jean Waldvogel, Mechanical Engineering ‘20
Questions for Panel
Safety/Emergency Planning

• Comprehensive review of emergency preparedness
  – Can communicate through
    • email
    • text messaging
    • automated voice messaging
  – Electronic message boards and sirens/public address systems installed around campus

Cornell Police – www.cupolice.cornell.edu
What Can Students Do?

- Provide emergency contact info
  - [http://www.epr.cornell.edu](http://www.epr.cornell.edu)

- Register local phone number and address
  - [www.cit.cornell.edu/services/whoiam](http://www.cit.cornell.edu/services/whoiam)
Suggestions for Success

• Use your Undergraduate Handbook
• Pay attention to important dates, deadlines
• Read the Sundial and emails - respond when asked
• Take responsibility for your learning
• Take initiative & ask for support…early!
• Develop study & time management skills
Time Management

• Prioritize
  – Academic
  – Extra-curricular
  – Socializing

• Act on priorities
  – Calendar book
  – Daily schedule
  – Classes, study time and location
  – Exams