

Engineering Staff Advisory Council (ESAC)
Annual Report, FY 2019-2020
Prepared by President Rachel Marek and Committee Chairs
Reviewed by the Executive Committee

The following report is a summary of the ESAC activities by committee for FY20 organized by 1. Standing Committees, 2. Ad-hoc Committees, and 3. A Look Ahead to FY21. Throughout the year the council enhanced long-running activities and added new initiatives in order to best fulfill our mission to *represent, promote, and give back*. We had a productive year despite the COVID-19 closures that restricted our initiatives planned for the spring semester.

1. STANDING COMMITTEES

Perpetual committees where membership is determined at the beginning of every operational year

Executive Committee: Rachel Marek (President), Jacob Heiden (Vice-President), Sarah Livesay (Secretary), Brian Snider (Treasurer), and Dawn Marshall (councilor at-large)

The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate goals and direction for the council, solicit constituent input, and express concerns to and receive feedback from College of Engineering administration. This term's Executive Committee enjoyed a robust working relationship with Dean Alec Scranton, which included **monthly meetings between President Rachel Marek and Dean Scranton where we discussed progress on this committee's recommendations to the Dean for improving staff climate and communication**. These recommendations included improvements to onboarding and welcoming, professional development, staff recognition and appreciation, communication between the administration and ESAC, and networking among staff and between faculty and staff. Significant progress was made toward these recommendations including an email from administration to the entire college to introduce new faculty and staff, promotion of existing professional development opportunities, sponsoring an information session on annual evaluations with HR Director Cathy Koebrick, the creation of a 4th staff award recognition contributions to student success, and an update on EAC activities from Finance and Operations Director April Tippett at ESAC meetings.

We worked with the Publicity Committee to organize and promote two staff Q&A sessions with Dean Scranton on December 12, 2019 in the SC with a satellite location at the NADS and on April 3, 2020 via Zoom. A summary of the questions with responses were posted on ESAC's website. **We also co-sponsored a Zoom Town Hall with Dean Scranton** on May 20, 2020 to discuss the process for returning to research activities.

Following student government's passing of a Climate Resolution ESAC was approached by Engineering Faculty Council to write a joint Climate Resolution from the College of Engineering that could be submitted to our respective constituencies for approval. EFC President Charlie Stanier drafted the joint resolution with input collected from President Rachel Marek and other faculty and student leadership in the college. ESAC introduced the resolution to college staff on December 16, 2019 followed by listening posts at SC, SHL, and NADS. We worked with the Publicity Committee to post responses to the comments and questions collected on our website, and we revised the staff Climate Resolution to incorporate the feedback we received. From January 27 to January 31, 2020 **we held a vote via Qualtrics for all college staff on the staff Climate Resolution, which passed**. The Climate Resolution was sent to the Offices of the President, Provost, and Sustainability and the Environment and to UI Staff Council. The College of Engineering staff and faculty Climate Resolution was featured in the Daily Iowan: <https://dailyiowan.com/2020/05/04/college-of-engineering-faculty-staff-councils-send-climate-resolution-to-ui-administration/>.

Following the highly publicized killings of Black people by police and white vigilantes; local, national, and international protests against police brutality; and the expressions of fear and disappointment from our own Black and non-Black students of color in the College of Engineering; **the Executive Committee drafted a response in support of our students and a call for meaningful change in our college.** Included in our statement was a pledge to work with incoming Dean Harriet Nembhard and college leadership. This statement was offered to current and incoming councilors for their signature and was then emailed to all college staff, students, and faculty on June 19, 2020. Feedback on DEI issues that we receive to our longstanding anonymous online webform and to our ESAC email address will continue to be forwarded with author permission to the DEI Council.

Elections Committee: Jacob Heiden (Chair), Rachel Marek, Dawn Marshall

The purpose of the Elections Committee is to solicit candidates for vacant seats on ESAC, carry out elections in accordance with our council bylaws, and organize staff appreciation day for all College of Engineering staff. The elections committee is most active during the spring semester. **We partnered with ESAC's College Engagement Committee to host a virtual happy hour** for staff to connect with colleagues during the COVID-19 campus closures. We also used the opportunity to encourage staff to participate in the election by nominating colleagues and voting.

We solicited nominations for the FY21 councilor election and received six, an increase from the previous term. Per our bylaws we organized the election from Wednesday May 27 to Wednesday June 3 through an impartial third party via UI Staff Council President Mike Weaver. **College staff elected all six nominees for two-year terms:** Travis Greenlee, Director of Engineering Career Services; Josh Lobb, Academic Program Specialist for Dept. of Biomedical Engineering; Michelle Reyes, Research Specialist at the NADS; Jeremy Roszell, Engineering Associate with the Engineering Electronics Shop; Katie Schnedler, Accountant in the Engineering Technology Centers; and Casey Westlake, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Events.

We purchased water bottles with the ESAC logo for distribution during our staff appreciation day, but distribution is delayed until the next term due to the COVID-19 campus closures and restrictions.

Staff Award Evaluation Committee: Rachel Marek (Chair), Katie Schnedler, Chris Schwarz, Mary Bender (2019 Mary Sheedy Award winner), Tony Loeser (2019 Staff Community Engagement Award winner), Nate Young (2019 Staff Research Award winner), and Sean Hessler, Director of Learning and Development (external evaluator)

The purpose of the Staff Award Evaluation Committee is to solicit and review nominations and recommend recipients of the Mary Sheedy Staff Excellence, Staff Community Engagement, Staff Research, and Staff Student Success Awards. The committee Chair Rachel Marek and next term's President and Chair of this committee Jacob Heiden **worked with HR Director Koebrick to create a fourth staff award, the Staff Excellence Award for Student Success.** The full committee is active during spring semester. All three staff award winners from last year and our external evaluator accepted the Chair's invitation to participate on this committee. **We reviewed many excellent nominations, and after careful deliberation recommended Marcela Politano for the Staff Excellence Award for Research, Drew Latta for the Staff Excellence Award for Community Engagement, and Laura Vasser for the Staff Excellence Award for Student Success.** Dean Scranton accepted our recommendations, and we had the pleasure of watching these four outstanding staff receive their awards at the College of Engineering Faculty & Staff Recognition Ceremony on Zoom on May 27, 2020. Committee Chair Rachel Marek **submitted a summary to HR Director Koebrick and next year's committee Chair Jacob Heiden of the general process used by the Staff Award Evaluation Committee including recommendations for next**

year's awards such as limiting the total number of pages for each nomination and support letter to 1-1.5 pages and the number of support letters to two. It was also recommended that a process be discussed for conflicts of interest and a process for voting if a consensus on the winner can't be reached by discussion.

By-Laws, Policies and Procedures Committee: Sarah Livesay (Chair), Rachel Marek

The purpose of the Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures Committee is to review bylaws and policies and recommend revisions to full council, and act as parliamentary advisor in order to maintain productive ESAC meetings. The Bylaws, Policies and Procedures committee **proposed revisions to the ESAC bylaws to add the new fourth staff award for student success and clarify the Awards Committee deliberation process.** Per our bylaws we introduced the revisions to council at our May meeting, and councilors of ESAC passed them unanimously during the June 2020 meeting.

2. AD-HOC COMMITTEES

Dissolved at the end of each operational year and reconstituted according to council interests

Wellness Committee: Chris Schwarz (Chair), Rachel Marek, Dawn Marshall, Sarah Lobb (staff at-large), Jenni Rumping (staff at-large), and April Tippet

The Wellness Committee was re-formed for FY20 to continue to provide opportunities for College of Engineering staff to participate in healthy and fun activities. **This committee offered two main initiatives in FY20: desk cycles and geocaching.**

The desk cycle funding proposal, storage space, and ergonomics and risk management consulting was arranged in the previous FY. However, roll-out of the desk cycle program was delayed due to the difficulty in applying the UI Risk Management requirements to our Outlook calendar reservation system. These issues were finally resolved by working with ITS, and our reservation calendar is called RES-ENGR-ESAC-WELL. The program debuted to college staff on January 13, 2020 with an endorsement from Dean Scranton. Information on the desk cycles program is available on the Wellness page of ESAC's website. After a trial period, we found there was unmet demand with staff at the NADS, so we moved one of the cycles there. We promoted the desk cycles at our chili cookoff and received feedback that a low cart for each desk cycle would make transporting around the building more efficient. When the COVID-19 closures hit this program had yet to take off among SC staff. We need to increase usage so we can fill out our Wellness Grant survey and receive our grant funds to reimburse the college for the purchase of the desk cycles.

This committee also organized a geocache hunt in Coralville on July 25, 2019 that was fun and educational. We looked for a mystery cache relating to Oakdale Hall and in the process learned several historical facts about its history as a tuberculosis hospital. We received staff feedback that there is interest in hosting a geocaching event on the main campus, and we recommend it for future consideration by the council.

Publicity Committee: Jacob Heiden (Chair), Sarah Livesay, Rachel Marek, and Brian Snider

This committee was re-formed for FY20 to promote operations by maintaining active communication outlets and increasing staff involvement. We **purchased magnetic nametags from the Engineering Electronics Shop for all councilors to wear during official ESAC events.** This option is more cost efficient and flexible than purchasing t-shirts as we had done in previous years for new councilors. **We managed ESAC communications with college staff through our regularly updated ESAC website,**

monthly email updates containing council information, a web-based anonymous suggestion box, and other email announcements as needed. We arranged participation via Zoom in our monthly meetings throughout the FY so staff could attend remotely. We also welcomed new staff hires and thanked recent staff departures for their service to the college.

College Engagement Committee: Katie Schnedler (Chair), Jacob Heiden, Sarah Livesay, and Brian Snider

This committee was re-formed in FY20 (previously named the Get to Know the College and Social Events Committees) to increase awareness of, and showcase the efforts of, the College of Engineering's many people, projects, and centers across all locations on campus while connecting and engaging staff across engineering units to encourage the exchange of ideas. We organized and held six events throughout FY20. **On July 2, 2019 we hosted a summer grill out** where beef and veggie burgers, hot dogs, and sides were served to 35 staff that celebrated a productive summer and made new connections. The Sustainability Committee collected compostable waste, including tableware and food scraps. **On September 19, 2019 we hosted an after-hours social event at Big Grove Iowa City** that was attended by 17 staff. **On October 20, 2019 we hosted a Halloween Cookie decorating contest** for 20 participants in SC and NADS. Participants were invited to take a picture of their creations, which were then voted on by college staff. The Sustainability Committee collected compostable waste. **On December 11, 2019 we hosted a holiday luncheon** that was attended by more than 50 staff and faculty. This is our only event specifically inviting faculty to join and was catered by Hy-Vee. All waste but the butter packet wrappers were diverted to compost, and leftovers were taken to the SC commons for students to finish off. **On February 25, 2020 we hosted a Mardi Gras chili cookoff** at both SC and NADS. Winners were Katie Schnedler at SC, who won the new golden ladle traveling trophy and John Gaspar at NADS, who won the coveted traveling NADS hat. The Sustainability Committee collected compostable waste, including tableware and food scraps, and the Wellness Committee demonstrated a desk cycle for participants to try out. In place of an in-person spring after-hours social **on April 29, 2020 we hosted a virtual happy hour for staff via Zoom**, where staff were encouraged to wear a fun shirt or hat and bring our own drinks. Our June summer cookout was cancelled due to COVID-19 closures and restrictions.

Community Engagement Committee: Dawn Marshall (Chair), Chris Schwarz, and Cher Carney (staff at-large)

The Community Engagement Committee was re-formed for FY20 (previously named the Community Service Committee) to support staff engagement with our community through partnerships with local service agencies. This committee organized three campaigns this year. **Our August Adopt-A-Classroom Campaign benefited HACAP Head Start** by providing fun and interesting classroom materials for toddlers and preschoolers. Donors provided over 150 items of classroom materials such as art supplies and educational toys. **Our winter campaign benefited the UI Food Pantry**, which first opened in 2016 to serve any staff, student, or faculty requesting help. This campaign collected over 120 items that weighed 98 pounds. **A spring campaign to benefit Project Linus through the donation of fleece fabric and group blanket making sessions was planned for March through May.** This campaign was postponed due to the COVID-19 closures. **After university staff began working remotely, ideas on how to safely engage with the community were shared in the Publicity Committee's monthly newsletter that allowed staff to use their judgment in protecting their health and safety while still supporting our community.** One example is Field to Family website for locating local sources of fresh food and a way to support the local economy. Another resource shared was the volunteer center organized by the United Way for finding opportunities to volunteer in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Sustainability Committee: Rachel Marek (Chair), Sarah Livesay, Dawn Marshall, and Natalie Potter (staff at-large)

The Sustainability Committee was re-formed for FY20 with the goal to increase awareness for and encourage participation in campus sustainability initiatives and explore opportunities to reduce the college's ecological footprint. We **maintained three main initiatives: packing materials re-use bins, compostable waste collection, and a recycling partnership with Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program.** We created content about each of these initiatives for ESAC's website on the Sustainability page. We **also coordinated communication between UI Surplus, Office of Sustainability and the Environment, and our College of Engineering Machine Shop to make satisfactory arrangements for recycling our scrap metal** rather than paying by weight for this heavy material to be hauled to the landfill. This issue has not been resolved due to the COVID-19 closures and restrictions.

Packing Materials Re-use Program: We maintained a packing materials re-use program that was started in December 2017 in partnership with a local small business. Packing materials are collected on 4th floor SC, HWTA, SHL, NADS, and ERF. Staff, faculty, and students who work in these buildings are encouraged to add or use packing materials in three categories: bubble wrap, air pockets, and packing peanuts. When bins are full the packing materials are picked up by Mailboxes of Iowa City, at no cost to College of Engineering, for re-use. This program collected 106 cubic feet of packing materials (roughly the size of 5 refrigerators) in the SC alone for re-use in FY20 until this program was discontinued due to the COVID-19 closures and restrictions. This program has collected 292 cubic feet in the SC over the lifetime of the program, not including what has been re-used within the college.

Compostable Waste Collection Program: We maintained a compostable waste collection program in SC, SHL, and NADS by contracting with CompostNinja from Ecocare Supply. The program serves approximately 100 staff, faculty, and students in SC, NADS, and SHL with twice weekly pickup of seven buckets for \$225 per month. While maintaining the seven contracted buckets, we also incorporated in-house buckets with ESAC-purchased compostable bags and signage to the Hanson Center for Technical Communication, the Chemical and Biochemical Engineering Department office, and the SC lactation room. These three buckets were maintained by staff in the college who periodically tied off the bags and added them to the nearest contracted bucket. A total of 1123 pounds of compostable waste were collected in FY20 until the program was suspended in mid-March due to COVID-19 concerns, an increase of more than 100 pounds from the previous fiscal year despite running for 3.5 months shorter. This program has collected 2500 pounds of compostable waste over the lifetime of the program (24 months from 2018 to 2020). This committee served as informal advisors to staff in Tippie College of Business who were interested in starting their own compost program, and Committee Chair Rachel Marek was interviewed by the Daily Iowan about our compost program:

<https://dailyiowan.com/2020/02/12/tippie-staff-work-on-composting-to-achieve-waste-reduction-goals/>. In addition to the office-based buckets we worked with the College Engagement and Executive Committees to supply compostable tableware and a lined bucket with signage to collect compostable waste at ESAC-sponsored events throughout the year including our July cookout, October cookie decorating, Q&A with the Dean, holiday luncheon, and February Mardi Gras chili cookoff.

Recycling partnership with Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program: Young adult volunteers supervised by MYEP staff use grabbing tools to remove trash from recycling bins throughout the SC to improve the landfill diversion rate. Their efforts help because bins of recycling that are excessively contaminated with trash are dumped directly into the landfill dumpster rather than into the recycling dumpster. The volunteers benefit by being part of our campus environment and gain work experience. The volunteers bring additional diversity into our college, and both the college and volunteers benefit from interactions with one another. In FY20 the group expanded their operations to include the annex. MYEP volunteers removed 1374 landfill items from recycling over 39 visits January 2019 to March 2020; their volunteer work began June 2018, but they didn't start using a clicker to quantify their impact until

January 2019. Demonstrating College of Engineering’s mission to be leaders on campus, we are the first university group to partner with MYEP, and we expect this collaboration to improve SC’s waste diversion efforts.

3. A LOOK AHEAD TO FY21

The Engineering Staff Advisory Council requested \$10,882.46 for FY21 (Table 1). This request is slightly higher than FY20 and includes funds to support councilors on billable hours, continue composting in the College throughout the year, and maintain the anticipated ESAC activities designed for staff. The ability to offer our councilors on billable hours the funds to cover their regular meeting attendance allows any staff in the College of Engineering to participate in shared governance. ESAC manages the composting program used by approximately 100 staff, faculty, and students. Remaining activities for which funds are requested include College Engagement activities, staff appreciation, and name badges for new councilors.

Table 1. Funding requested for FY21.

Initiative	Cost	Rationale
Councilor Billable Hours	\$6141.46	Salary+fringe for 1.5 hours per month of median salary for 7 councilors (represents 70% of staff on non-GEF funds)
Composting	\$2700	\$225 per month for 12 months of compost pickup at seven CoE sites in SC, SHL, and NADS
ESAC Activities	\$2041	These funds will be used to maintain expected ESAC activities including staff appreciation day, holiday feasts and cook-offs/cookouts, after-work socials, and other initiatives of staff interest.
Total	\$10,882.46	