EECS Town Hall Agenda

Most popular questions:

- "How are faculty encouraged to be good advisers? Are there any reward structures or review processes in place to ensure the success of graduate students?" (CS 1)

- "Can we set standard access rules for graduate students to access all three buildings? At least getting through the front door would be nice, if not the grad workspaces." (EE 1)

Section 1: Chair’s Presentation (Spanos) - 4:05 -4:20

- Welcome

- Acknowledge program review outcomes (good & bad) and major areas of improvement that we’re working on

- NRC Ranking Update

- Address issues surrounding M.Eng. (from chair mtg with student reps and 2009 student survey results)

- GSI Supplement Policy (w/ Rebecca?)

- Address these student questions:
  - What is the faculty action plan for following up on the conversations that take place at this town hall and make sure that this is not just another report on shelf?

  - Faculty usually get feedback from graduate students through student administered quizzes. This is the first town hall in 10 years; How can we develop a more consistent ..." - How can we develop a consistent feedback mechanism for grad students, so that the faculty and administration can be regularly reminded of the issues that are most important to us?

  - What’s the forecast for departmental hiring in the next few years? Is the university hiring freeze starting to thaw?"
Section 2: Structured Q & A (Culler – Moderator) - 4:20 – 5:00

4:20-4:30 - Graduate Advising & Academic Issues (Bora, Ras, Kubi, Nathan Cheung)

- "How are faculty encouraged to be good advisers? Are there any reward structures or review processes in place to ensure the success of graduate students?"

4:30 – 4:45 - GSI Policies (Babak)

- "What are the policies on the GSI to class size ratio? How are GSIs protected from having to teach large sections?"

- "GSI appointments are often handed out by advisors to students. Is there, or can there be, a structured way for an interested student to obtain a GSI position in a class their advisor does not teach?"

4:45-4:55 - Access/Facilities Issues (David Culler (space), Kate (budget), Loretta (repairs/cleaning), Scott (access)

- "All EECS undergraduates have access to both Cory and Soda after hours; Can we set standard access rules for graduate students to access all three buildings? At least getting through the front door would be nice, if not the grad workspaces." Scott

- "Is there a plan/budget for keeping Soda Hall out of disrepair? That is, for making more of it (including common areas) be a nice, clean, modern office environment?" Kate/Loretta

- "Can we get funding to build more common workspaces in Cory? More lounges that are not behind closed doors?" Kate/D. Culler

- "Can we close off the alcoves similar to the 5th floor or cut down on the noise coming from the alcoves in some way? It's nice to have an open door policy in the office, but it is impossible when it is near an alcove. (The responder may wish to merge the answer with other questions and address the general availability of private space in Soda for meetings/phone calls. D. Culler"

4:55-5:00 – Diversity/Community/Climate Issues (Arcak)

- "What are the faculty doing about the gender gap (both at the graduate and undergraduate level)? What are the other top schools doing that we're not?"

Section 3: Unstructured Q & A (Culler – Moderator) - 5:00-5:25

The unused questions/topics on the next page will be up on a powerpoint slide or on a handout to prompt students about ideas if they need them.
Section 4: Trivia Quiz (Culler – Moderator) - 5:25:5:30

Possible Questions/Topics for the Unstructured Q & A

COMMUNITY & DIVERSITY

Department Community: "How can we build community between and within the EE and CS divisions? (Let's try to stick to constructive ideas, and not compare the two divisions, or brand them as better and worse...)"  D. Culler

Faculty Diversity: "What are we planning to do to attract and retain under-represented minorities in computer science? Will there be support from the faculty?" Murat

GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE

Graduate Student Well-being/Mental Health: Undertaking a Ph.D. in a top graduate program like ours is, by nature, a stressful endeavor. Are there ways in which the department could assist students in coping with the stress or reduce the stress (without compromising the quality of the work)? Nathan/Kubi

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Lab Rotations: "Would it be possible to introduce structured lab/research group rotations for incoming students? Each student could choose 2-3 advisors with whom he/she is interested in working and spend some number of months interacting with each group." Nathan/Kubi

Time to Degree: "Does the department have plans to reduce the median time to graduate to be closer to the normative (advertised) time to graduate, and to bring us in line with our peer institutions (Stanford=5, MIT=5.8, UCB=6.3)?" Bora/Ras

COURSES

Undergrads in Grad Courses: "I've been noticing more undergrads in the graduate courses. This normally isn't a problem, but when they approach 50% of the students, the quality falls. What can we do to allow undergrads to participate while maintaining the graduate experience?" Ras

SPACE & ACCESS

Private Meeting Space: "Is there a way to add private meeting spaces for non-ParLab/RadLab students? Could we turn some large alcoves or unused offices into small meeting rooms? The alcoves on the 5th & 6th floors are often booked for things like office hours." D. Culler

Noise: "Can we get a cell phone booth on each floor so that we don't have to hear people's cell conversations in the hallway?" D. Culler