

# SECEDHA 2025 Spring Meeting

March 22, 2025

Norfolk, VA (ECEDHA Annual meeting)

## Minutes

- Fred Beyette (UGA): Introductory remarks
  - Last act – stepping down as Chair of SECEDHA
  - Southeast ECEDHA oldest section, most active
  - Handing leadership over to Asis Nasipuri (UNCC, Chair), Hai Xiao (Clemson, Chair-elect), Ben Klein (Kennesaw State, Secretary)
- Asis Nasipuri (UNC – Charlotte)
  - Thanks to Fred
  - Regional meeting has its own value
  - Round of introductions. Several schools reporting enrollment boosts
  - Plan for Fall meeting
    - Hosted in Charlotte on Nov 6-7
      - Arrive noon Thursday; Noon-5PM tour of campus or local engineering-interest location
      - Thursday evening reception and keynote, adjourn 8:30 PM
      - No more SCEEE
      - Friday 8 AM – 2 PM meet and conclude
    - Discussion: Proposed topics of interest for Fall meeting
      - Proposed topic: Graduate recruitment and impact of enrollment
        - UNCC seeing 50% drop in applications from int'l students
        - Look for other sources: increase in domestic?
        - Undergraduate enrollment boost: where is it coming from? Answer: CS
        - Some schools report flat graduate applications, others see drops
        - Proposed discussion: Common recruitment/retention/supervision practices in graduate space, especially for international students
      - Proposed topic: Faculty development best practices
        - Supporting junior faculty during crisis – adding a year similar to COVID? Will that help? Retooling research direction
        - Faculty not interested in leadership roles
      - Proposed topic: Strategies for ECE in light of new initiatives – AI degrees, colleges of computing – how to compete
      - Proposed topic: Now that DEI is illegal, how do we still appeal to diverse groups?
        - DEI was helpful at Vanderbilt – big success in boosting diversity. 51% female .
      - Proposed topic: Federal funding landscape issues –

- If NIH overhead goes to 15%, should we move indirect to direct costs?
- 60% fewer research awards at Kentucky – general slowdown in federal awards
- How to deal with impact
- Semi-random impact – especially hard to make offers to graduate students
- If PhD enrollment goes down, will impact faculty hiring
- Look at Florida, which has experienced some of these impacts already
  - Almost impossible to hire Chinese students
  - Try to recruit American students
  - Applications from India going down, weaker applicants
- Proposed topic: Curriculum development issues – AI, etc.
  - Duke has MS in AI, as does Kennesaw State
  - Should we revamp our undergraduate curriculum in response to AI?
  - How much math? How much circuits?
  - Is ChatGPT allowed? How to use AI in courses?
  - Topic was covered last year
  - ECE perspective on AI- how to differentiate from other disciplines?
  - Does AI change the fundamental meaning of being an engineer? How we work?
  - AI Engineering degree? No ABET criteria
- Proposed topic: ABET updates
- Proposed topic: Faculty work-life balance, including department heads
  - Faculty tension – how to address
- Proposed topic: Mid-career faculty support – unexpectedly high number of faculty who go into a slump (post-tenure)
  - Getting stuck at Associate Prof rank - stagnation
  - (separate issue: Retention immediately post-tenure)
  - More disengaged, less inclined to mentor, etc.
  - Research funds might be harder to get
- Proposed topic: How to help teaching faculty – topics evolve fast, curriculum updating fast
- Proposed topic: More aspects of retention – Salary compression and inversion
- Proposed topic: Disengagement of students in classroom increasing?
  - Attention span dropped to 20 minutes
  - Active learning approaches
  - Abstract/theoretical topics can be challenging
  - VIP as a solution? Also may help graduate recruitment

- Proposed topic: Faculty disengagement – want to connect via Zoom rather than attend in-person
    - Empty offices
    - Solution – no hybrid meetings, only in-person.
      - Put something big on the agenda
      - Serve food
      - Schedule for an hour and a half
- Fred: Leadership will trim down topics
  - Don't let meeting devolve into 'exhaustion over the crazy' –
  - Engineers solve problems
  - Asis: leaders can't say much about political situation, just keep moving as best you can. Early days for changes, Nov meeting we will hopefully have better idea of what is developing
- Comment from Mark – ECEDHA board has tasked with creating (virtual?) meetings for like-type colleges (R1, teaching, etc) also divided by region
  - Additional from Fred: ECEDHA trying to partner better with regional groups. We need to think about what we would want from ECEDHA
  - Mark: Southeast is most active region, 'poster child'
- Fred: SCEEE update – Mark (Auburn) not here.
  - From meeting in October 2024: after current awards, funding withdrawn. Program shut down
  - All SCEEE board members resigned in October.
  - Mark withdrew remaining funds, split funds evenly between 2 institutions that had proposals withdrawn
    - No conditions, funds distributed
    - Mark will close account at Regions soon
    - Mark & Fred will resign SCEEE shortly after
    - Summary: SCEEE is defunct.
    - Woody passed away in October, may have been precipitating event.
  - Q: is there a possibility of ECEDHA doing a replacement for SCEEE? I.E. small grants to support new researchers/students.
    - Mark: ECEDHA orienting resources towards keeping org viable in uncertain times
      - Impacts on membership, attendance at conferences, sponsorships, gov't attendance, etc.
    - IREDEFINE: what is future? Want to support but uncertain.
    - No decline in membership/attendance noticed in ECEDHA yet.
    - Membership is actually up year-over-year
- Closing. Thanks