Minutes of the meeting of the Engineering Committee,
Date: April 9, 2004.

Guest member attendance: Donald Pearl, Margaret Ehrlich.

1. The meeting was held on the Clarkston campus, and commenced at 1:30 pm.

2. The main subject under discussion was a proposal to expand GPC's Engineering major. The proposal was consequent to a meeting with Georgia Tech in March 2004, in which GPC's possible participation in the Regents' Engineering Transfer Program (RETP) was discussed.

(As background, at that meeting GPC learned that with the addition of a few required courses to our Engineering curriculum, our students could be accepted under RETP directly into one of Georgia Tech's engineering majors. This prompted the proposal presently under discussion.)

3. The one major problem with the proposed curriculum, as it stands, is that it calls for a student to complete more hours of study than are permitted for the major, and in fact could not realistically be completed in less than three years. The hard limit on the number of hours counting toward an AS-Engineering is forcing committee members to be highly creative in fashioning a program of study that will be acceptable to the student, to GPC, and to Georgia Tech.

4. There are two distinct issues here:

1. Participation in RETP, to streamline the process of transfer from GPC to Georgia Tech and
2. Increasing enrolment in engineering courses at GPC. The second issue in particular is seen as essential to the survival and health of the Engineering major at GPC. Since it appears that modifying the Engineering major to be acceptable to Georgia Tech is unworkable due to the hours limitation, other options must be considered.

Following are among the ideas discussed.

a) Create a new degree program, Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Engineering. RETP students in Engineering would complete the RETP curriculum, receive an AAS degree and transfer to Georgia Tech, while non-RETP Engineering students would complete the current Engineering curriculum and receive an AS degree. The advantage is that the AAS does not have as many social science/humanities requirements; therefore these could be removed from the degree and replaced with the courses required by RETP (this is also in line with Georgia Tech, who indicated that they would like to see transfer students continue to take social science and humanities courses in their third and fourth years). The main
disadvantage is that AAS is considered to be a technical degree, not an academic degree.

b) Consider the possibility of attaching RETP to a major other than Engineering. Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry were offered as alternatives. The advantage is that another major might have more flexibility than Engineering to add the required courses. The disadvantage is that it would tend to divert students away from Engineering, and make already low enrolments even lower. Mr. Raj agreed to compare the degree requirements for these majors to see which major might be the "best fit" for RETP.

c) Increase the hours limit for the AS degree. Certain other majors (Nursing, Dental Hygiene) have been exempted from the 60-62 total hours limit. The obvious advantage is that a higher hours limit would allow all required courses to fit into the degree program. The major disadvantage is that it would require approval by the Board of Regents, and there is a relatively low probability that such a request would be approved.

d) Participate in RETP without requiring students to get a degree from GPC at all. A course of study would be created for RETP students, and upon completion they would transfer to Georgia Tech without receiving a degree. This would make RETP very simple to implement, as no changes at all would need to be made to the major, but would do nothing to increase enrolment in Engineering (at least not directly), nor would it increase the number of AS-Engineering graduates.

5. Increasing enrolment in engineering courses. It was agreed that this issue is separate from the RETP issue, and should be addressed as such. Better cooperation and coordination in the scheduling of classes between different campuses would best help increase enrolment at all campuses. It was suggested that Engineering courses could be consolidated at one campus or rotated between campuses from one semester to the next, but several members of the committee doubted that that move would result in more students enrolling in classes.

6. It was agreed that since Mr. Honkan is the only full-time faculty member in Engineering, that he should be the committee chairman for the year 2004-05. Mr. Rusodimos agreed to be co-chairman. There are at present two full-time faculty positions open in Math/Engineering, and one of the persons hired for these positions could also assume some duties of the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20.