SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

SSE Policy on Formation, Composition, and Maintenance of Departmental External Advisory Councils

Effective Date: November 12, 2026

All departments within the School of Science and Engineering (SSE) must maintain an external advisory council. These councils bring departments a valuable outside perspective, from alumni, industry, and community leaders, on the professions our students enter and the problems our research addresses. In some departments, these perspectives are necessary for accreditation.

1. Purpose

This policy sets standard practices for forming, composing, and maintaining departmental external advisory councils in SSE. Councils provide strategic counsel to the department chair, strengthen connections with alumni and industry, and help secure the resources that advance the department's academic mission and student success.

2. Role, Size, and Composition

a. Councils are advisory. They offer perspective and counsel to the department chair. They do not direct departmental or school policy, curriculum, personnel, or budget decisions.

b. Councils should have 10 to 15 active members. This is large enough for a range of perspectives and small enough for each member to stay engaged.

c. Members should be distinguished alumni, industry leaders, and community partners with the expertise and capacity to advance the department's mission.

d. Each council will have a chair, selected from among its members by the department chair. The council chair works with the department chair to set meeting agendas and leads council discussions.

3. Philanthropic Expectations

a. Council members are expected to support the department philanthropically each year, at a level personally meaningful to them, and to help advance the department's development priorities.

b. Exceptions to this expectation are rare and require the Dean's approval. Examples include members whose employers or government positions restrict charitable giving. Approved exceptions are recorded with the member's appointment and reviewed at each renewal.

4. Terms of Appointment

a. Members are appointed to three-year terms. Terms begin July 1 and end June 30.

b. Terms may be renewed. Renewal depends on the member's active participation, continued support of the department, and the agreement of the member and the department chair, following consultation with the Dean under Section 5.

c. Departments will record each current member's original appointment date. Terms are counted in consecutive three-year cycles from that date, and the member's current term ends at the close of the cycle

now in progress. If that date falls within twelve months of this policy's effective date, the term runs to the end of the following academic year. If the original appointment date cannot be documented, the department will use the earliest documented date of service. If no such date exists, the term will be treated as beginning July 1 of the year this policy takes effect.

5. Appointment and Renewal Procedures

a. Before any formal invitation, offer of appointment, or renewal is extended, the department chair will discuss the prospective or renewing member with the SSE Dean. This lets SSE coordinate council membership with school priorities and with Advancement.

b. The chair should begin the consultation at least 30 days before the intended invitation or renewal date. The chair should bring the candidate's background, the proposed term dates, and any requested exception under Section 3.

c. The selection or renewal of a council chair also requires consultation with the SSE Dean before the invitation is extended.

6. Meetings

a. Each council will meet at least twice per academic year and receive regular updates on department activities and priorities.

b. Members are expected to attend at least one council meeting each academic year.

7. Maintenance and Administration

a. Each department will keep a current roster with appointment dates, term end dates, and any approved exceptions. The department will coordinate with SSE Advancement on members' giving participation.

b. By September 1 each year, each department will submit its council roster to the Dean's office, with the term dates and exceptions described above.

8. Transition

Councils that do not currently meet the size requirement in Section 2 should reach it as member terms expire. Members are not to be removed early to comply with this policy.