

# Proposal to the Program Review and Assessment Committee

1. Name and rank/title of Project Director(s):  
Elaine Cooney (Associate Professor) and Kenneth Reid (Associate Professor)
2. Department/Division and School:  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology  
Purdue School of Engineering and Technology
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7. Project Title:  
**Assessing Student Civility**
8. Project Dates (all projects must be completed within one year of award !)  
Rubric development/validation: Summer, 2004  
Evaluation: Fall, 2004  
Report/dissemination: Spring, 2005
9. Project Checklist
  - Statement of support from the department chair or school dean by e-mail to [esener@iupui.edu](mailto:esener@iupui.edu)  
*- letter of support is attached*
  - Simple budget : A detailed budget is not necessary. Nevertheless, please include a brief paragraph/details indicating how you intend to spend the grant money.  
*- budget is included in the proposal*
  - IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval attachment by email or hard copy to [esener@iupui.edu](mailto:esener@iupui.edu) or ( Erdogan Sener, ET –309 K , IUPUI) or project director statement that IRB representatives have been consulted and all requirements have been fulfilled sent to same. Disbursement of funds will be contingent on receipt of approval by the Institutional Review Board, if human subjects review is necessary.

## **Assessing Student Civility**

*Elaine Cooney, Kenneth Reid; Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology*

### **Abstract:**

One of the stated outcomes in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology program's assessment plan is students will "demonstrate ethical conduct as described in the university student code of conduct and demonstrate civility as stated in the university civility statement." The instrument that we will develop to measure of civility will be a key assessment tool for the Principals of Undergraduate Learning "Understanding Society and Culture" and "Values and Ethics". In this project, we will develop rubrics to assess students' ability to demonstrate civility and principled choices. Faculty in the department will complete the survey each semester, and students from selected courses will fill out a similar rubric annually. Results will be collected and recorded. After a beta test during the fall semester, data will be compared semester to semester to see if changes made improved students' civility. These rubrics will be used as part of the department's assessment plan, and can be disseminated to other departments.

### **Purpose of project:**

This project focuses on assessing components of two of the IUPUI Principals of Undergraduate Learning (PULs) as part of the assessment plan of the department of ECET. The PUL regarding "Understanding Society and Culture" includes "operate with civility in a complex social world." In addition, the PUL "Values and Ethics" includes "make informed and principled choices regarding conflicting situations." TAC-ABET (our accreditation agency)

provides a list of program outcomes required of all accredited programs. Two are very similar to the PULs described above:

- i. an ability to understand professional, ethical and social responsibilities,
- j. a respect for diversity and a knowledge of contemporary professional, societal and global issues

These outcomes are very difficult to define and measure. Yet, assessment requires data that can support our students' success in meeting these objectives. The Chancellor's Civility Statement (<http://www.iupui.edu/administration/chancellorsnews/civility97.htm>) gives us some observable actions that demonstrate social responsibility and a respect for diversity. IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, Part I: Student Rights and Responsibilities ([http://life.iupui.edu/dos/code/Part\\_1all.html](http://life.iupui.edu/dos/code/Part_1all.html)) describes ethical behavior of students – behaviors that can be observed in the classroom and lab.

The department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology developed an assessment plan, starting with early career goals and objectives for current students and graduates. The assessment plan follows a model set forth in the TAC-ABET Technological Education Initiative Workshops ([http://www.abet.org/TEI\\_workshops.html](http://www.abet.org/TEI_workshops.html)). The specific objective addressed in this project is “Demonstrate ethical conduct as described in the university student code of conduct and demonstrate civility as stated in the university civility statement.” Now that we have defined some observable objectives, we need to develop a method to collect measurable data.

Elaine Cooney and Ken Reid have already developed rubrics to assess writing, speaking, team work, and design. These rubrics and their use will be presented in an upcoming paper at the American Society of Engineering Educators annual conference.

**Outcome of this project:**

We propose to develop rubrics that can be used to collect data regarding students' civility as presented in the Chancellor's memo and part one of the student code of conduct. A rubric lists the specific evaluation criteria used to judge work or behavior. It requires explicit statements of what excellent, average, and poor behavior are.

Our first effort will be identify specific characteristics from the Chancellor's memo and the student code to be assessed. Not all behaviors listed in the documents will be assessed. Instead, eight to 15 items will be written to cover the depth and breadth of the two documents. After the characteristics are identified, definitions of excellent, average and poor behavior must be agreed upon and described. This work will involve researching literature on ethics, distributing to faculty and asking for feedback.

After drafts of the rubrics are completed, they will be validated by Charlie Feldhaus, a professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision with a specialty in ethics. Charlie's suggestions will be incorporated into the final rubrics.

**Assessment method:**

After the rubrics are completed, the faculty rubric will be used each semester to survey the ECET faculty about the students' abilities to demonstrate ethical conduct and civility. The student rubric will be used once during the year to survey the students in a set of classes to be identified.

**Data analysis:**

The existing rubrics for written communication, oral communication, team work and design are used as part of our assessment plan. For example, to evaluate written communication in our AS degree, each semester faculty teaching ECET 157 and ECET 234 use the departmental writing rubric to evaluate the semester project report. The data from individual students' evaluations are collected into aggregate data for each class. This data is tracked from semester to semester. As innovations are made regarding writing instruction, the results are evaluated to see if student writing was improved.

The data collected from the ethics and civility rubrics will be collected each semester. The anonymous results from individual professors and individual students will be compiled to give an aggregate picture of the department as a whole.

#### **Evaluation & dissemination:**

After the rubrics have been used, faculty will be polled to ascertain if the characteristics addressed in the rubrics are easily observable during class/lab and if the definitions (excellent/average/fair) describe the observations made during class/lab. To disseminate the rubrics, we will seek an existing assessment database to collect and store the data, as well as an existing web-based collection mechanism. We will submit a paper describing the rubrics and their use for presentation at next year's ASEE annual conference. We would also like to find a publishing venue to present part or the whole of our departmental assessment plan.

#### **Intended use of findings:**

As explained above, the rubrics will be developed then used to collect data from faculty and students. The rubric will be validated by an OLS faculty member. The results will be

tracked and evaluated as part of the department's assessment plan. The rubrics will be disseminated to other interested departments. The rubrics and their use in our assessment plan will be the subject of a conference paper. If the assessment results warrant, the department will investigate ways to include civility "training" within the curriculum.

**Budget description**

The budget will be used for a summer stipend for the grant participants: \$1000 to Elaine Cooney and Ken Reid, and \$500 to Charlie Feldhaus. This equates to approximately four days of effort in developing the rubrics and incorporating them into the departmental assessment plan.

March 4, 2004

Program Review and Assessment Committee:

This letter is in support of the proposal entitled "*Assessing Student Civility*" by Elaine Cooney and Ken Reid, Associate Professors of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology.

Professors Cooney and Reid have developed a creative assessment plan for the department and other interested departments. The department plan includes assessment rubrics. It will be used by the entire ECET faculty to evaluate the critical skills of communication, team work and design as described in the IUPUI Principals of Undergraduate Learning and TAC-ABET objectives.

The accomplishment of this goal is particularly forecast for success due to the commitment of Ken Reid and Elaine Cooney to it. These two individuals have worked on assessment for many years. Ken has been the department representative for assessment. Both have taken short courses for TAC/ABET outcomes-based assessment. Both have previous involvement and welcome future challenges. This team is well suited to carry out this project.

The development of this ethics assessment is a crucial component of our departmental assessment plan. Your support for this project is highly recommended.

I welcome the opportunity to recommend the value of funding this project.

Sincerely,

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Marvin A. Needler, Chair  
Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology