September 15, 2015

Hello. As Chair of the Civil Engineering Department, I extend greetings from our students, faculty and staff. As I look back on the past several years and a new academic year gets underway, I am amazed at the changes we have experienced.

We currently have about 256 undergraduate BS degree seeking students and 12 graduate students. By contrast, we had 126 undergraduate students in 2003-2004, when online delivery was in the earlier stages of implementation. We are still the only institution in the U.S. offering both on-campus and online delivery of an ABET-accredited BSCE program. Approximately half of our undergraduate students are online or distance students, and this ratio was reflected in our 2014-2015 graduating class for the first time. In 2014-2015, we had 37 BSCE graduates and 7 MS and MEng graduates.

The Department has seen several changes in faculty and staff in the past three years. The Administrative Secretary position so ably held by Mary Jo Sturman for seventeen years was vacated in July 2012, when Mary Jo accepted employment with the Grand Forks School System. We were sure the world was falling apart. But, the Department was fortunate to find a very able Mary Winters to step into the role of Administrative Secretary.

Dr. Charles Moretti retired May 16, 2015, after a career at UND that spanned nearly 31 years, 26 of which were with the Civil Engineering Department. Dr. Moretti served as Chair of the Civil Engineering Department from 1999 to 2010. During his long academic tenure, Dr. Moretti was extremely active and recognized in the North Dakota Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), which he led as President for several years and in other elected official office capacities, too. As UND Civil Engineering Department Chair, Charles led two successful ABET accreditation processes. He taught a wide array of courses in the department, including many laboratories, environmental courses, and most importantly, was the principal instructor for the CE 482/483 Civil Engineering Design I and II capstone design course. He gave freely of his time and talent in advising the UND Student Chapter of ASCE and their Steel Bridge Competition teams. And, he was heavily invested in the classroom instruction, research activities and efforts of the undergraduate and graduate students and the department staff and faculty. He was nominated for UND Outstanding Teaching awards on at least two occasions. He carried out research and authored final reports in a wide array of topic areas from construction materials durability to environmental water and wastewater studies. He provided many hours of advising and assistance to his graduate students, as they carried out research activities in the laboratory.
or in interpretation of research results. Dr. Moretti has never been one to “blow his own horn.” If it was in his power to help students, staff, or faculty, he did so unselfishly and their gratitude was enough reward and recognition for him. For these reasons, he will be remembered fondly by the students, faculty and staff of the UND Civil Engineering Department and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

In 2014-2015, the Department was able to hire Mr. Bruce Dockter in the role of Senior Lecturer and Laboratory Manager. He has made a tremendous contribution to the updating, organization, and safety of the laboratories and to the ability to cover some lower level course instruction.

In 2015, the Department was able to hire Dr. Feng “Frank” Xiao to fill the tenure-track, environmental engineering role formerly held by Dr. Moretti. Frank brings a tremendous chemistry and water quality modeling background to the Department’s efforts to expand research and publication.

The Department is approaching the ABET accreditation visit in November, 2015. Through on-going assessment activities and the efforts of the Civil Engineering Department Advisory Board and the faculty, many program improvements have been documented and some new BSCE curriculum modifications are in the works for Fall 2016 implementation. The curriculum modifications are: changing CE 101 Introduction to Civil Engineering to CE 101 Introduction to Civil Engineering and Sustainable Design and changing CE 202 Introduction to Digital Terrain Modeling to CE 202 Civil Engineering and Sustainable Design II. The primary changes to these Freshman/Sophomore courses include exposure to Grand Challenges facing engineers and scientists, the introduction of team-based projects involving research, planning, data/sample gathering, use of technology (like AutoDesk AutoCAD & Civil 3D), sustainable design, project management and team-working skills, and environmental and life-time implications of materials and process selections, designs, and alternative resources development.

Through the primary efforts of Dr. Sukhvarsh Jerath, Graduate Program Director, Dr. Gullicks, the College of Engineering and Mines, and Dr. Julie Anderson and with the assistance of the faculty, a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering Program was approved for Fall 2015. This is a welcome change from the previous multi-disciplinary Ph.D. in Engineering Program with a Civil Engineering track, providing us with a more marketable degree. I expect this to help our Department expand its graduate enrollment and research and publication activities.

Above all, we are thankful for the charitable giving support of our alumni, local companies, local consulting firms, and other with strong connections to UND. And, we are thankful for the research funding provided by governmental agencies, cities, and professional associations, allowing equipment purchases and supporting graduate students and faculty research for important infrastructure-related issues. Without this support, many of the student activities and student organizations currently receiving Departmental funding would not be possible. Much of the discretionary spending on laboratory equipment, supplies, computer systems, software, faculty training, practitioner instructors, and other critical elements of exceptional learning environments would not be possible. And, many disadvantaged students and hard-working, motivated, and high-performing students would go without
scholarships that are so important to stimulate academic success and the development of the best and brightest engineers of the future.

Last, but not least, we owe a debt of gratitude to those of you who have given generously of your time to serve on the Department Advisory Board, helping to shape our BSCE Program Educational Objectives and shape curriculum changes based on on-going assessment of our Student Outcomes, and to provide practitioner lectures. The generous financial support and time commitments of our alumni and others is essential to our Department’s efforts to produce top-quality engineers.

Among the noteworthy laboratory improvements and equipment procurements made possible, in part with charitable giving and research funding agency support, in the past couple of years are:

- reconstruction of the fume hoods and ductwork in the Environmental Lab
- repair of the MTS load frame equipment in the CE Structural Lab
- three state-of-the-art, survey-grade, Topcon GPS dual-receiver systems
- new freeze-thaw chest
- new bending beam rheometer
- two programmable, flow-paced HACH automatic water samplers
- disk-shaped compact tension test apparatus for asphaltic concrete fatigue testing

On behalf of the students, staff and faculty, I encourage you to stop in to visit with us the next time you are in Grand Forks. We will always strive to be good stewards of the financial and time resources you choose to share with us. We would not be where we are today without you. Your involvement in our programs bolsters our confidence in the future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Harvey Gulllicks, Ph.D., P.E.
Chair and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering