



Jamal Yagoobi Professor and Chair

Year 2003 has been a great year for our department. This fall semester, the MMAE Department received 73 very qualified freshman students (plus an additional 14 students who have not yet declared a major), one of the largest freshman enrollment in recent years. All three of our undergraduate programs were re-accredited. This year, through IIT's direct investment in undergraduate programs, the MMAE Department developed a new undergraduate laboratory with renovated space and all new equipment. This "prototype" laboratory, which will be available from spring 2004 semester, consists of experimental modules representing the department's three engineering disciplines. This laboratory will provide a learning-conducive environment for our undergraduate students. Additional information on the prototype laboratory is provided in this issue of Vectors.

Despite the recent US visa constraints, the graduate student enrollment in our department also continued to grow this year. This fall we had 83 new graduate students registered in MMAE programs. We are committed to attracting our own top undergraduates to our graduate programs. This year we initiated a special recruitment event and invited our top undergraduate students to discuss the option of graduate study and the various financial resources available to them. The event was very well received by our students and we will continue holding such events every year.

The next few years are going to be very critical for our department. We need to increase the research funding level and endowment significantly. With the new faculty hires and the ongoing faculty joint research collaborations, I am confident that we will increase our yearly research funding by fifty percent in the next four years. This year Dr. Murat Vural joined our department as an assistant professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering. Currently, we have two faculty positions open in the department and the searches are underway.

We have initiated fund raising to outgrow and expand each module of the prototype laboratory into a full scale state-of-the-art laboratory in its field. To achieve this, we need to raise, per laboratory, approximately \$300K as capital investment and \$1M as endowment. The capital investment will allow for the purchase of new equipment and renovation of the laboratory space, and the endowment will provide funds for yearly operation, maintenance, and upgrade, as well as support of a dedicated teaching assistant. I am relying on our alums who can greatly help us achieve this goal. Please note that there are opportunities for naming these laboratories after generous donors. We are also contacting companies and foundations for large donations. I truly believe that with your help we will be able to achieve our goal. It goes without saying that expanding our prototype laboratory into four complete state-of-the-art laboratories will significantly impact our three undergraduate programs and will make our students among the best educated graduates in the nation.

Whether you are a former or future student, colleague, or industry professional, please do not hesitate to contact us. We want to hear from you.

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message from the chair