



Fairfield University

School of Engineering & Computing

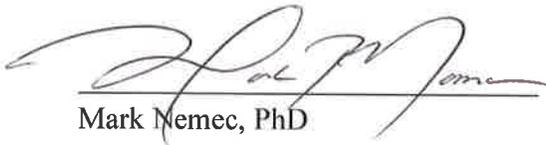
School of Engineering and Computing (SEC)

Governance Document

2026

Approved by SEC General Faculty on 28 February 2026

Approved by University President:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Nemec". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Mark Nemec, PhD

Date: 3/3/26

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Purpose, Vision, and Mission of School of Engineering and Computing

Purpose

To help students on their path to a better future and towards becoming the best version of themselves, in service to one another and for the greater good. We do this by providing unique educational opportunities and by accompanying them in their personal and spiritual growth.

Vision

To become the most emblematic Jesuit Engineering program in the AJCU.

Mission

To provide every student with a rigorous technical education in engineering and computer science disciplines, infused with the humanities and liberal arts, and anchored in the principles of Ignatian Pedagogy. We seek to develop the student's hearts and minds with a deep sense of social justice and a strong interior life.

I. Departments and Programs

I.1. Members

The School of Engineering and Computing (SEC) of Fairfield University is composed of - students, faculty, staff, and the various Industry and Executive Advisory Boards.

In addition to full time faculty who are subject to the provisions of the Fairfield University Faculty Handbook, the School benefits from the services of practicing engineering professionals, listed as lecturers or adjuncts, and who typically teach occasional courses in subjects in their technical specialty. They provide a link between the classroom and engineering practice and contribute with their expertise, and through curricula development and design.

I.2. Departments and Programs

A department is a body of faculty, within a school, responsible for the disciplinary academic programs assigned to it by the faculty of the school and the General Faculty. Academic programs are organized sets of courses that lead to particular degrees or other credentials.

I.3. Educational Policies

Departments and Programs shall determine their own pedagogical approaches, including the conduct of courses and methods of instruction within the general framework of principles adopted by the General Faculty and SEC and administered by the Dean of the School.

Matters of concern to specific departments and programs shall be acted upon only after members of the department or program in question have had a reasonable opportunity to discuss them and to make recommendations. An individual faculty member shall be the implementer of instruction

for the courses assigned and shall have freedom of instruction within the courses' scope as determined by the department or program.

II. Administration

II.1. Dean

The Dean is the chief academic officer of the School of Engineering and Computing (SEC) and must provide vision and leadership. The Dean's primary responsibilities include faculty development and recruiting; planning and developing the budget and managing financial resources; initiating strategic initiatives leading to additional resources; prestige and reputation; planning, implementing and evaluating the School's academic programs, in coordination with Department Chairs and Program Directors. The Dean will consult with departments in a timely manner on all matters affecting them, including staffing, curriculum, resource allocation, and related decisions. In addition, the Dean represents the University and the School in a variety of corporate, community, and advancement activities.

II.2. Associate and Assistant Dean (s)

Associate and/or Assistant Dean(s) are appointed by the Dean with the approval of the Provost. They report to the Dean of the School and assist the Dean in areas of responsibilities prescribed by the Dean. The Associate Dean(s) must be members of the faculty and be affiliated/appointed to one of the academic departments of SEC.

II.3. Department Chairperson: Eligibility, Appointment, and Term Limit

Eligibility: All tenured full-time faculty within department not serving as administrators. Any exceptions must be approved by Academic Council. In cases where exceptions from Academic Council are required, the SEC representative on AC will communicate between Department, Deans Office, and Academic Council.

Appointment: The Chairperson of the department shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the full-time departmental faculty. Any eligible faculty member is permitted to nominate themselves for consideration for the Chairperson position. A faculty member from another department within SEC will oversee the election process, ensuring it is conducted via secret ballot, and will report the results to both the Department and the Dean. If the Dean chooses not to appoint the elected Chair, the Dean will communicate reasons and department will conduct a new election. This process will be repeated until a Chair is successfully elected and appointed. If, at the end of this process, no Chair is appointed and no eligible faculty members remain, an Interim Chair will be elected and appointed by the Dean in consultation with the department faculty for a non-renewable one year term.

Term Limit: The Chairperson is elected for a three-year term effective July 1st. The Chairperson is normally limited to three consecutive terms as defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Chairpersons shall receive compensation (e.g., stipend and course release) per the Memo of Understanding.

II.4. Duties of Chairperson

The duties of the Chairperson include:

II.4. A. Faculty Relations

- As the head of the unit, conduct faculty merit evaluations and communicate those to the Dean and faculty.
- Coordinate course scheduling with the Dean's office and University Registrar.
- Assign teaching schedules in consultation with instructors.
- Monitor course enrollments and reassign faculty as needed.
- Support faculty development through training and mentorship in matters of school policy, syllabi planning, class leadership, and faculty responsibilities.
- Encouraged to evaluate teaching performance through classroom visits for formal peer feedback.
- Ensure examinations and assessments meet departmental and school standards.
- Make recommendations regarding faculty promotion and tenure in accordance with University guidelines.
- On a yearly basis, identify departmental representative to serve on the ad-hoc faculty mentoring group and inform the Dean who will notify all faculty of the composition of the faculty mentoring group.

II.4. B. Student Relations

- Assign undergraduate students to faculty advisors in coordination with Assistant Dean.
- Address student performance issues and complaints within the scope of authority.
- Serve as the first point of contact for unresolved student concerns before referral to Deans Office.

II.4.C. Curriculum and Planning

- Lead and coordinate all activities related to ABET accreditation
- Oversee curriculum content within departmental programs and course areas.
- Secure faculty approval followed by SEC curriculum committee approval for major curricular changes and report to the Dean.
- Identify laboratory needs and submit equipment requests to Dean in coordination with lab staff.
- Continuously improve and lead long-term academic planning and program development.

II.4.D. Syllabi and Instructional Materials

- Review syllabi for compliance with School standards and report to the Dean.

II.4.E. Budget Management

- Assess departmental needs and prepare annual budget requests for approval by the Dean.
- Supervise and manage departmental expenditures within approved allocations.
- Approve faculty travel as it pertains to research and faculty development.

II.4.F. Equipment Oversight

- Ensure effective use of laboratory equipment and materials in coordination with laboratory staff.
- Report changes in equipment status and maintain inventory records.
- Identify external funding opportunities and assist with grant proposals.

II.4.G. Meetings and Communication

- Conduct formal departmental meetings at least twice every semester.
- Call a department meeting at the request of any two department members
- Attend meetings convened by the Dean and participate in School-wide faculty meetings.

II.4.H. Additional Responsibilities

- Facilitate departmental collaborations with internal and external partners.
- Lead recruitment efforts in accordance with University policies.
- Initiate strategic initiatives to enhance program rankings, with Dean's support.

II.5. Procedure for Removal of Chairperson

The process of removal of Chairperson can be initiated by any fulltime faculty member of the Department or the Dean if there is a serious breach of duties listed in Section II.4. Outlined below are the steps required to begin the process of removing the chairperson:

1. The petitioner(s) must first discuss the issue directly with the chairperson in a personal meeting and try to achieve a resolution. If the petitioner is a faculty, they can request the Dean to communicate and try to resolve the issues with the chair.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the petitioner(s) may request that the matter be added to the agenda of the next scheduled department meeting.
3. Should the department meeting fail to resolve the issue, the complainant(s) may escalate the matter to the Dean of SEC, who will attempt to mediate and resolve the concern. This step must be taken within ten (10) class days following the department meeting.
Note: If the complainant is the Dean, they may bypass this step and proceed directly to the Academic Council after completing the first two steps.
4. If the issue is still unresolved after meeting with the Dean, the petitioner(s) may, within ten (10) business days of that meeting, request Academic Council to consider this matter. Academic Council will gather information from relevant parties and arrive at a decision which is final.

II.6. Program Director

Eligibility and Appointment: Department Chairs normally serve as Program Director for any academic program housed within the department as defined in the faculty handbook. If a need arises, a Program Director other than the Chair may, in consultation with the department, be appointed by the Dean from the department's full-time (non-visiting) faculty not serving as administrators.

Term Limit: Program Directors shall serve for three-year terms and normally be eligible for reappointment for no more than three consecutive terms.

Program Directors shall receive compensation (e.g., stipend and course release) per the Memo of Understanding.

Duties of Program Director: The duties of Program Director shall include:

- Coordinate Advising students within the major/minor
- Lead all activities for ABET accreditation in the undergraduate major
- Collaborate with Department Chair to review curriculum and recommend changes/updates
- Advertise program and recruit students
- Update course catalog and program brochures
- Prepare annual report for the Program and share with Department Chair
- Serving as a liaison for the School and its students to firms in the industry

III. Faculty

III.1. Academic Freedom

All full time and part time faculty members shall have the academic freedom to teach their courses within the scope of the courses assigned and consistent with the interests of the School and the Academic Freedom section of the Fairfield University Faculty Handbook.

III.2. Voting Rights

Full voting rights at meetings of the School of Engineering and Computing shall be granted exclusively to full-time faculty members of SEC. Similarly, full voting rights at meetings of individual departments or programs will be granted to those who are appointed to the respective department or program.

III.3. Teaching Responsibilities

All full-time and part-time faculty members are responsible for teaching the courses assigned to them. This responsibility includes, with guidance from the Chairperson or Program Director, planning syllabi and course materials; developing and administering assessments such as exams, papers, and other activities; calculating and reporting grades in accordance with the School of Engineering and Computing and University policies; encouraged to participate in the culminating

experience of senior design, and fully participating in the School's Assessment, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement program.

III.4. Curriculum Development

Faculty members participate in curriculum development for their area or program, as well as for their individual classes. Syllabi for individual courses are prepared according to standards developed in the School in the framework of the Assessment/Evaluation/Continuous Improvement program of the School.

III.5. Student Advising and Mentoring

Full-time faculty members shall serve as academic advisors to students in the School, as assigned by the Chairperson or Program Director. Faculty Advisors shall be available to advise students during regularly scheduled office hours throughout the semester and during registration periods. Advisors shall have access to lists of their assigned advisees at the beginning of each academic year and shall retain access to advisee records until the student graduates or changes advisor.

III.6. Accreditation Activities

Faculty are responsible to support accreditation activities including ABET by providing materials, adapting the curriculum and syllabi to meet accreditation criteria, provide evidence of outcomes, and participate in the writing of the self report and accreditation visits.

III.7. Research Support

Support shall be provided, within the limits of the school's resources, to members of the faculty to pursue their research interests. This research support shall include, but not be limited to, expenses for participation at approved conferences, publication expenses as needed, and student research assistants. Faculty are also encouraged to develop external funding to support summer salaries and graduate research assistants to further develop their research focus.

IV. Students

IV.1. Student Advisory Council

Each student organization or society with affiliation to the School of Engineering and Computing must appoint a representative to serve on the Student Advisory Council. These organizations and societies include but are not limited to: American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), Baja Society of Automotive Engineers (Baja SAE), Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES), Engineers Without Borders (EWB), Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Tau Beta Pi (TBP), and Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE).

Each organization is required to have a representative present at each Student Advisory Council meeting. Typically, the president of each student organization serves as the representative; however, another designated member may attend if the president is not available.

The Student Advisory Council must meet at least once per semester. Each academic year, the Council shall elect a President, whose primary responsibility is to collect and communicate student input to the School of Engineering and Computing administration. The Student Advisory Council is also responsible for planning, organization, and implementation of special events throughout the academic year, including activities associated with National Engineers' Week.

Organizations must participate in the Student Advisory Council meetings in order to remain in good standing and to receive financial support from the School of Engineering and Computing. They should also follow COSO rules and regulations.

V. Governance

V.1. Meetings of General Faculty

The SEC General Faculty will meet at least once each semester and at other times upon call of the Dean of the School or by petition of one-fifth of the faculty to the Faculty Chair.

- Those entitled to participate and vote at such meetings are all full-time faculty members of the school. The Dean may invite other persons to participate in faculty meetings from time to time.
- Written notice of School faculty meetings shall be given to all faculty members at least ten business days prior to each meeting. This time limit shall not apply to meetings called on an emergency basis.
- 2/3 or more of the current full-time faculty shall constitute a quorum thereof. The affirmative vote of a plurality of those present at a meeting shall control, unless otherwise required by these Governance Procedures.
- Full time faculty members have a contractual obligation to attend meetings of the SEC General Faculty, as well as all departmental meetings.

V.2. Faculty Chair

- SEC faculty shall elect a Faculty Chair for a two-year term. Eligible candidates are full-time, non-visiting faculty, not serving in an administrative role, with at least five years of service at Fairfield University.
- Responsibilities of Faculty Chair include:
 - Conduct meetings and maintain meeting minutes
 - Develop meeting agenda in consultation with the Dean
 - Representing SEC faculty

V.3. Committees

V.3.A. SEC Curriculum Committee

- The SEC Curriculum Committee shall consist of one full time faculty from each undergraduate major, the SEC representative(s) to UCC and GCC, and one representative (ex-officio) from the Dean's office.
- Each department will conduct an election at the end of previous academic year to elect the members to serve on the curriculum committee.
- At the first meeting of the academic year, the Committee shall elect a Chair from among the voting members.
- The SEC Curriculum Committee will meet as necessary to approve curriculum changes that will be further routed through other University Committees as delineated in the Journal of Record.
- The SEC Curriculum Committee will meet as reasonably requested and scheduled by the Committee Chair to advise on matters related to SEC curricula.

V.3.B. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc committees may be created by the faculty or the Dean to deal with specialized issues relating to the School.

V.4. Executive Advisory Board

The Executive Advisory Board (EAB) of the School of Engineering and Computing (SEC) assists in carrying out the mission of the School by fostering strong connections with industry, professional organizations, and the broader engineering community. The main functions of the SEC Executive Advisory Board are to provide strategic and philanthropic support to the School. As part of this relationship, the Board assists the University President, Provost, and the Dean of the School in prioritizing and advancing key initiatives that strengthen the School's academic programs, research, and external partnerships. The Board may also advise the President in appointing the School leadership.

In addition, the Executive Advisory Board assists the University administration—particularly the University Advancement Division—in the development of facilities upgrade, scholarship and equipment funds, both restricted and unrestricted. The Board will also contribute to funding SEC initiatives and may recommend strategic priorities or appropriate allocation of these funds in support of the School's mission.

The School values the Advisory Board's input in shaping its long-term vision, industry partnerships, and program development. Recommendations made by the Board will be reviewed by the Dean's Office and discussed with relevant faculty committees. The School will make every effort to implement feasible recommendations, taking into account available resources and

program needs. SEC Faculty maintain ultimate authority over curriculum and academic content to ensure alignment with accreditation requirements and educational goals. To promote transparency, a summary of Board discussions, recommendations, and outcomes will be shared annually with faculty and other key stakeholders.

The membership of the Board should be no fewer than Eighteen (18) members, appointed by the Dean upon the EAB Chairperson's recommendation for renewable three-year terms. Board members shall be selected from industry, the engineering profession, and the community at large based on their demonstrated expertise, leadership, and potential contributions to the School's success. The Board elects its own chairperson and other officers as necessary for renewable annual terms. The Board meets at least twice per year and shall periodically invite the Provost, or other University leaders to attend meetings. The Board may appoint committees or task forces as needed to carry out its responsibilities and address specific strategic objectives or emerging opportunities.

V.5. Program Industrial Advisory Board

Each Department Chair shall appoint an Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) for each academic program in the department, composed of senior or management-level professionals in the department's specialty who are active in local or regional industry. The main purpose of the Program Industry Advisory Boards is to provide input related to program quality, ABET accreditation, industry trends, and future workforce needs.

The Department Chairperson chairs the Industry Advisory Board and calls regular meetings at least once a year. The Industrial Advisory Board assists in assessing the curriculum, advises on employment trends and opportunities, provides insight on emerging technologies and their relationship to courses, and reviews the Program's Educational Objectives for continued relevance. An Associate Dean can be appointed to serve as a member of each Program Industrial Advisory Board as a representative of the administration of the School of Engineering and Computing.

Each Program IAB's recommendations will be documented and shared with the respective department faculty and Dean's Office. The School will seek to implement practical and beneficial suggestions, while recognizing that faculty retain responsibility for determining academic and curricular changes. Annual summaries of Industrial Board input and any resulting actions will be compiled and shared across departments to encourage alignment and continuous improvement.

VI. Amendment Procedures

All amendments to this document must be accepted by both the University President and fulltime faculty members of the School of Engineering and Computing. Faculty approval is obtained by a simple majority of the quorum and voting at a regularly scheduled meeting of the faculty of the School. At a minimum, every 5 years, this document will be reviewed and revised by a committee appointed by the Dean of SEC in consultation with Faculty Chair.