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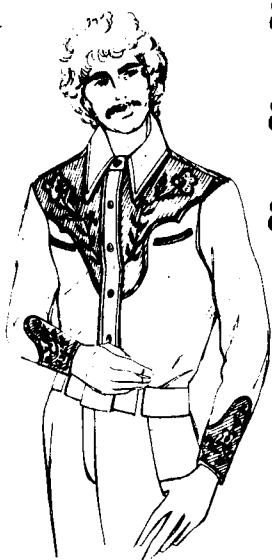
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Technology Defined Problems Outlined

By Roger W. Schiller



A good subtitle for this essay might be, "Whoever heard of a technologist?" Depending on who is doing the defining, a technologist might be anyone in the engineering world from a glorified draftsman to a practical engineer.

An examination of the various curricula offered at colleges around the country reveals that students are being trained for the same wide spectrum of jobs. Companies in their interviews often ask about the difference between an engineer and a technologist. About the only place where all agree is the recognition that a technologist is a graduate of a four year program in engineering technology.

So then, where do the programs at Capitol Campus fit into this maze of definitions and job titles? What are the good points that we should stress? What areas should be examined so as to improve the programs?

The Engineer's Council for Professional Development, the national accrediting agency, states the technologist should be working closer to the engineer than the draftsman.

The main function of a technologist is to support the practical side of engineering with emphasis on the end product rather than the research and development. In the area of mechanical engineering, the engineer might decide what machine is to be built and the technologist would see that it gets built.

At Capitol Campus, the programs in engineering technology are geared to a high academic level. This

more and more material into each course without ever looking to see what might be taken out. This tends to force our students to absorb increasing amounts of material in a short time, and that is not always possible.

A related problem is how much formal class time should be required for a unit of credit. Some classes meet for as many as four recitation periods and a double lab period, while other classes meet as few as three recitation periods per week. I might add that this problem exists at schools other than Capitol Campus.

Another problem, also present at other schools, is the tendency to teach all of the courses in our own programs rather than make use of a more varied approach in teachers and courses. This has the danger of leading to overspecialization.

The question of professional registration looms ahead as a major problem. Our students do very well on the state engineer—in-training examinations. In fact they do so well that some states have legislated that a graduate of a four year program in engineering technology cannot ever take such an exam and thus cannot ever be registered.

Probably the most serious problem facing the engineering and technology faculty (outside of money) is the meeting of standards for the promotion to the senior ranks of Associate Professor and Professor. The dilemma here is that one is supposed to do research and publish. And yet, the very nature of our programs precludes much activity in this area.

The problem is worsened still further when one examines the proposed guidelines for tenure and promotion. If these guidelines are enforced with any degree of rigidity, it will be impossible for any member of our engineering faculty to be considered for promotion to Full Professor rank by a colleague in our Division.

So, we end where we began by again asking "Whoever heard of a technologist?" Industry has heard of them. Industry hires our graduates and, in many cases, calls them engineers. The faculty has become well known throughout the country. We are alive, thank you.

means that many of the texts are the same as those used in regular engineering programs. Our students are able to master course material which is pitched at a higher level than that given at most engineering technology schools. The attrition rate at Capitol is much lower than at some schools, even with the higher course levels.

Of course, the Penn State Associate Degree programs in engineering technology have this same comparatively high level of coursework.

All of the faculty of engineering and technology at Capitol Campus have some industrial experience, and they relate this experience in presenting theory and design examples in the classroom. Many of our

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faculty are registered professional engineers. Most have advanced academic training and several have earned doctorates.

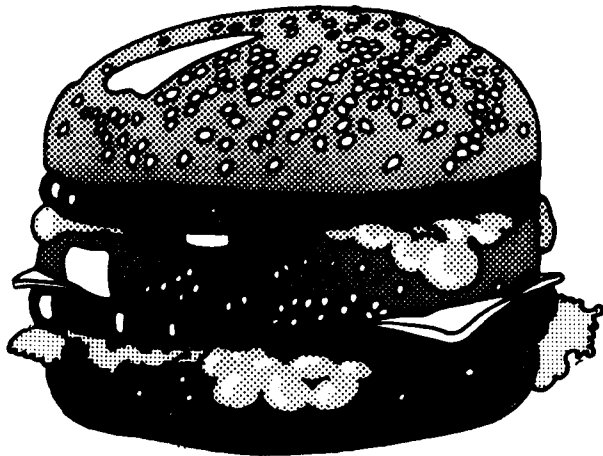
Quite a few of our faculty are involved in the work of professional societies at various levels. At the present time, three of our faculty serve as chairpersons for local sections of national professional societies. I believe that this is some sort of record. Still others are involved with national committees, standards boards, and such.

Even though our programs are not supposed to prepare students specifically for graduate school, several of our graduates now have masters degrees and at least one is studying for a doctorate. So, it appears that our programs and our graduates can be matched with almost any in the country.

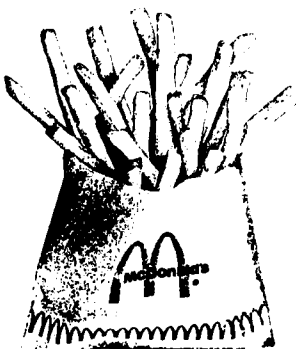
However, there are some problem areas, and some of those will be discussed in the remainder of this article.

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