KSU

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

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April 7, 1992

TO: James Coffman

FROM: Peter Nicholls, Dean

SUBJECT: Computing and Information Sciences

You recently received a letter form Virg Wallentine on the subject of the location of the Department of Computing and Information Sciences. It is noted in this letter that the faculty of CIS has voted unanimously to investigate a move to the College of Engineering, and a variety of reasons are given. Further, a number of conditions are stated as needing resolution before any move is undertaken. Since many of these items will have an impact in the College of Arts and Sciences, I am taking the liberty of setting forth my concerns in this matter.

I feel that I do not yet fully understand the reasons for the proposed move, although several have been voiced on various occasions. Perhaps I could address some of these:

1) Economies of Scale

One could argue that economies of scale might result from a closer relationship between CIS and the computer engineering component of the EE department. However, CIS is arguing that every dollar of support from this College should accompany them in any move, and that they should remain located in Nichols Hall. Where are the economies?

2) The Natural Academic Home

Although arguments have been made that Engineering is a more "natural" home for computer science departments than is the Arts and Sciences setting, I don't find any of these to be terribly convincing. Certainly models of both types exist on the national scene. In view of the high priority that the Department apparently attaches to its service component, I think one could make a strong case for staying in the primary service College.

3) Accreditation

In his letter Virg alludes more than once to the recent CSAB accreditation visit. I have not yet seen any report from the visiting team, but apparently they have recommended that CIS be housed in the College of Engineering. Quite frankly, I find any arguments based on CSAB accreditation to be specious. Accreditation by this agency is not necessary, indeed many (if not most) of the highest quality computer science programs in the country are not accredited by CSAB.

4) The Grass is Greener

There is a feeling among the faculty that resources will be more abundant in Engineering, and that significant enhancements of their faculty lines, salaries, OOE etc. will follow from this move. I seriously doubt that resources in Engineering will permit the level of expansion that the Department anticipates, but if the Institution does have major resources for CIS, I would assume that these could equally well be channelled through Arts and Sciences.

If we are to proceed with discussions on the possible relocation of this department, then we must have a common understanding of the rationale for the move. In addition to this, I must remark that the conditions stated by the Department as required for the move place unacceptable demands on the resources of the College of Arts and Sciences. We have in recent years reallocated substantial resources to this Department (3.5 new positions in the last 5 years) and to see these resources simply moved to another College would be intolerable.

cc: Virgil Wallentine
    Donald Rathbone