7 April 2010

Dear 2010 ASEE Southeastern Conference Attendees:

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of the College of Engineering and the entire Virginia Tech University community, welcome to the 2010 ASEE Southeast Section Conference. If you have never visited with us, we hope you will find Virginia Tech and Blacksburg special places that you will choose to visit again. What a wonderful season of the year to be here!

Ten years ago we hosted the conference at our Hotel Roanoke facility. Now we think the convenience of our new Inn and Skelton Conference Center presents a better picture of life at our university and allows you to easily tour the campus and visit with colleagues and friends who are here in other colleges.

The theme of this year’s conference, “The Engineering Educator of 2016,” is certainly appropriate in light of the current date and the National Academy’s well-known publication, “Educating the Engineer of 2020.” A mere ten years separates this conference from that graduating class and the abstracts submitted demonstrate that our professional community is responding well. Another indication of that is the existence of specific departments or schools of engineering education such as we now have at Virginia Tech. That department did not exist ten years ago. We sincerely hope you will find time in your schedule to meet some of the graduate students and faculty in that department, many of whom are participating in the conference with you.

We are fortunate to have Dr. Dennis Hong as our keynote speaker. An internationally recognized expert on novel robotic locomotion systems, Dr. Hong has a passion for advising student design competition teams. In addition to numerous academic awards he is the inventor of the three-legged walking robot ‘STRIDER’ and the ‘whole skin locomotion’ inspired by amoeboid mobility mechanisms. He is a pioneer in the use of evertting and nutating motion for locomotion in soft body robots.

These are exciting and challenging times in our field. Multiple events over the last decade have shaken us in ways we did not foresee. However, our profession is one that thrives on challenge and we always emerge better for it. That is who we are.

The current economic situation has impacted all of us and we want to thank you and your institutions for making the sacrifices necessary to be here.

Best regards,

Richard C. Benson
Dean of Engineering
Paul and Dorothea Torgersen Chair