

Kenneth J. Reid

Associate Dean and Director, R. B. Annis School of Engineering

## Brown-Bag Seminars: Guide and lessons learned

### Introduction:

**Brown-bag seminars** are weekly / bi-weekly hour-long, informal sessions meant to disseminate pedagogical topics, innovative course material, group discussion, or promotion of research. The “brown bag” term implies that the sessions are near the lunch hour, so ‘bring your lunch’ is part of the theme.

The brown-bag series in engineering has always been on Thursdays at noon, conveniently both at lunch time and at a time when there were few engineering classes. The sessions run for one hour.

The brown-bag series has been in place for five semesters, beginning with our return to face-to-face from COVID. A spreadsheet to sign up is available at the beginning of the semester.

We have had individual workshops, multi-week sessions covering critical pedagogy in our DesignSpine program, research presentations, and hands-on CAD (Computer Aided Design) to build tables. We have recently used a period or two to informally discuss University issues.

Attendance has always been strong; usually, if not always, everyone who isn't teaching or traveling at the time, including faculty and staff.

### Scheduling & Topics:

**Find an hour where most people are generally free; propose that hour in a school / department meeting. Establish a google sheet for signup early in the semester, and a method for people to submit desired topics. Be prepared to ask people who may have an interesting topic to present and those who recently attended a conference / workshop.**

In the case of engineering, we have DesignSpine, which requires quite a few tools of project management. One of the original intents was to bring all faculty and staff together to present the tools which our students were expected to use, and which our faculty and staff may have limited exposure. We also had faculty discussing that this would be a great opportunity to learn tips and tricks of CAD.

Each semester's schedule:

	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2	week				
3	1	1/21/21	NETI-3: Lessons Learned I		Saqib, Sunny, David, Eliot, Joan
4	2	1/28/21	NETI-3: Lessons Learned II		Saqib, Sunny, David, Eliot, Joan
5	3	2/4/21	Classroom tips: wrap-up anything remaining from NETI-3, Zoom settings (Saqib), Google quizzes (Eliot) Row-base		
6		2/11/21	(no meeting - spring break day)		
7	4	2/18/21	<a href="#">Academic Misconduct</a>		Ken, George
8	5	2/25/21	Gen-Ed core advising tips		Steve to Lead (brought up at faculty
9	6	3/4/21	<a href="#">Assessment</a>		George, Ken
10	7	3/11/21	Agile		Paul
11	8	3/18/21	Agile and project management - open questions		Paul & Aaron
12	9	3/25/21	DS - what do we do in each level?		George, David, Joe
13	10	4/1/21	<a href="#">Student support - community and retention - what do we need to build support?</a>		Ken
14	11	4/8/21	<a href="#">"Why UIndy?" - discuss: what's our message?</a>		Ken
15	12	4/15/21	DS: gate reviews		
16	13	4/22/21	DS: project management key concepts & the DesignSpine		David, Megan, Joan
17	14	4/29/21	DS: review		David, Megan, Joan
18	15	5/6/21	ABET - where are we?		ABET committee

Winter semester 2021 began with lessons learned from faculty who were able to attend the National Effective Teaching Institute (NETI). Most faculty participated via zoom. Zoom recordings were made available.

week				
1	9/2/21			
2	9/9/21			
3	9/16/21			
	9/23/21			
4	9/30/21	ABET review		ABET team
5	10/7/21	296: Don't Mess it Up		George
6	10/14/21	Advising		Steve <a href="https://uindy.z">https://uindy.z</a>
7	10/21/21	Standards-Based Grading Overview		Steve
8	10/28/21			
9	11/4/21	ABET review - how did we do, and what did we learn?		Ken & ABET committee
10	11/11/21	(Veteran's Day - no classes, no brown bag)		
11	11/18/21	Engineering Notebooks - background		George
12	11/25/21	(Thanksgiving - no brown bag)		
13	12/2/21	Engineering Notebooks - implementing		George
14	12/9/21			
15	12/16/21			

Fall 2022 saw a late start, as it was our ABET semester. We attempted to introduce DesignSpine tools for the first time this semester, with varying success. Standards-Based Grading was a huge hit.

1	week			
2	1	1/20/22	Safety orientation: tools, drill, etc.	James & George
3	2	1/27/22	Safety orientation: tools, drill, etc.	George & James
4	3	2/3/22	snow day	
5		2/10/22	Pseudo-project introduction, Classroom attendance tracker	George, David, Saqib
6	4	2/17/22	Pseudo-project introduction, Classroom attendance tracker (generate questions)	George, David, Saqib
7	5	2/24/22	cancelled - DS conflicts	
8	6	3/3/22	Define requirements; Relative importance survey	
9	7	3/10/22	Advising	Steve, Paul
10	8	<del>3/17/22</del>	(Spring Break)	
11	9	3/24/22	P&T	Steve, Paul
12	10	3/31/22	CAD - build a table	Paul, James
13	11	4/7/22	CAD - build a table	Paul, James
14	12	4/14/22	CAD - build a table	Paul, James
15	13	4/21/22	Morph chart (if CAD is complete)	
16	14	4/28/22	Test Plan - work on the introduction and get tests from various faculty	
17				

Winter 2022 started with hands-on safety training and training on hand tools. This was a second attempt at DesignSpine tools with improved success. The key is to remember the audience: the intent was to give instruction and examples, rather than background or where tools originated. The highlight was multi-week CAD to design a table which was built for a printer station.

week			
1			
2			
3	9/15/22	Tools of 198	George/Saqib
4	9/22/22	n/a	
5	9/29/22	Tools of 198	David/George
6	10/6/22	n/a	
7	10/13/22	Tools: wrapup and discussion	
8	10/20/22		
9	10/27/22	Marketing, planning	
10	11/3/22	Marketing; school visits	
11	<del>11/10/22</del>		
12	11/17/22	Speaking to K-12 (Chris Floyd, guest)	
13	<del>11/24/22</del>	(Thanksgiving)	
14	<del>12/1/22</del>		
	12/8/22	Data! with Paul & Steve	

Fall 2022 saw more conflicts and greater difficulty in scheduling, and we decided to go to an every-other-week model. This semester also saw some larger-scale University-wide issues, and as engineering started to do more marketing and school visits, there was a focus on how to effectively do so. A local high school teacher was invited to informally talk about how to be effective when visiting a high school class. This was the most successful workshop of DesignSpine tools.

Date	minutes	Topic	Presenter	Conference
2/9/2023	40	e4usa: "The Who, What, and Why of Engineering"	Ken Reid	NSTA Annual Conference
2/23/2023	15	Investigation on the Mechanical Properties of High-Temperature Polymer with Material Extrusion Additive Manufacturing	Rashedul Sarker	IMECE-ASME Conference
3/9/2023	20	Driving the Conversation of Social and Educational Influences in Human-Centered Design Biases Among First-Year Engineering Students	Megan Hammond Joan Martinez Liz Ziff (Sociology)	ASEE 2022 Conference
<del>3/23/2023</del>	40	Computer Vision Applications	Mohammad Shirazi	FICC, IEEE ISC
3/30/2023	50	Electrolyte measurements of fast-charging lithium-ion batteries; A novel visual heat transfer exam review activity	Najmus Saqib	ECS, ASEE
4/13/2023		Vibration Control with Nonlinear Absorbers	Eliot Motato	ASME Conferences
4/27/2023	50	P&T process: lessons learned (for those going up in the near future)		

Winter 2023 saw a change to every-other-week (formally) and we went back to one original intent: to repeat presentations from conferences. This has been very successful in sharing research among faculty and building some research relationships. The biweekly schedule allowed for DesignSpine committee meetings to move to biweekly and share the time slot.

**Moving forward:**

We will continue meeting biweekly. This allows for another committee meeting to easily be scheduled, and leads to improved anticipation.

It has become an expectation that, if someone attend a conference or workshop, they'll share at an upcoming brown-bag. This build accountability and disseminates good information.

We will likely invite more guests to informally share.

**Keys to success:**

- Find a best time, add to all calendars
- Ask at any opportunity for faculty or staff who have ideas, who have attended workshops, conferences, or who have presented to present to the rest of the program. There are really no bad ideas.
- Leave a few weeks open for general discussion. This has (presumably) led to fewer "hallway" (negative) conversations and increased transparency.
- Promote the 'brown bag' concept. If there is an opportunity to share food or a theme, do so.
- Keep it light and informal. Attendance is optional, but encouraged.

**Questions?**

Ken Reid, reidk@uindy.edu