On Campus

Donald Goldfarb Named SEAS Executive Vice Dean

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Donald Goldfarb

Donald Goldfarb has been named the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science’s executive vice dean, a new position in which he assists dean Feniosky Peña-Mora with faculty hiring, promotions, tenure, teaching assistants, and how space is allocated and renovated.

“The dean has to manage all kinds of things, like financial aid, student services, fundraising, and alumni development,” says Goldfarb, the Alexander and Hermine Avanessians Professor of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research, who was acting dean from 1994 to 1995. “My position is to help with the more academic

side.”

Goldfarb’s appointment was made halfway through the fall semester, amid tensions at the engineering school. This fall, several department chairs, and later a number of tenured faculty members, wrote a letter to senior Columbia administrators expressing their dissatisfaction with Peña-Mora’s management and asserting that he had failed to properly communicate with faculty on a variety of issues, including how space is allocated. Their complaints were the subject of a *New York Times* article on December 8.

John Coatsworth, the University’s acting provost, acknowledges that faculty have “legitimate concerns” and says that he and president Lee C. Bollinger are helping Peña-Mora and the school address them. Coatsworth notes that Peña-Mora has done a good job of recruiting top professors to SEAS, enhancing the school’s academic stature, engaging alumni, and fundraising.

“With Donald’s involvement,” Coatsworth says, “I expect that communication between the dean’s office and the faculty is going to improve.”

Adds Goldfarb, “The engineering school has grown tremendously in the past few years, so it’s not a surprise that the dean’s office should require the assistance of an executive vice dean. When I was acting dean in the 1990s, the school was half the size it is now. I’m bowled over by the increased complexity of the dean’s job in running the school and serving all its faculty and students.”



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