

# From the Dean

**F**OLLOWING PUBLICATION OF MY letter in this past spring's issue of *Michigan Engineer*, Richard Olson (MSE NucEng '55) wrote me. He began:

"I read your article in (the) spring 2007 edition of the *Michigan Engineer* magazine. I agree with your philosophy that an engineering career means being well-rounded in all the disciplines, (having) a passion to make a difference in the world, and perhaps most important of all, a desire to be the best you can be."



Richard proceeded to tell me how, since leaving campus, his career had embodied that philosophy. He spent 41 years at DTE working on projects such as the Fermi I and Fermi II reactors. He taught at Cass Technical High School and Wayne State University in Detroit. And he's shared experiences with and mentored numerous students and younger colleagues.

I want all of our students to have broad educational experiences that prepare them for a range of post-College leadership roles. Because I feel so strongly that Michigan Engineers must be just as capable outside of the classroom as they are inside, I've taken steps in recent months to help our students take advantage of the breadth, depth and quality of their Michigan Engineering education. For example, I have appointed Jeanne Murabito to the new position of Executive Director of Student Affairs. A long-time advocate for students, Jeanne

is now the point person for all that we do involving students. You can read on page two about her views on preparing the next generation of Michigan Engineers.

Jeanne will use a "design/build/test" approach as we review, restructure and improve our classroom experiences, counseling services, student project offerings and organizations. As your institutions do, the College must continue to adapt, innovate and get better. Over time, we expect more students will become involved in research, team projects and entrepreneurial activities.

We're making progress in establishing more of those entrepreneurial opportunities for students. Thomas Zurbuchen, an associate professor who has a real passion for all things entrepreneurial, is leading the charge. You'll read about his and other efforts in next spring's *Michigan Engineer*.

Like many of you who graduated some time ago, I had a much different college experience than today's students. The "sage on the stage" model was the norm when I was in school. While our faculty members still have an important role in sharing their knowledge through traditional lectures, today's students need – and expect – much more. As you'll read inside this special education-focused issue, we're expanding the classroom in numerous ways to include hands-on experiences – in the lab just down the hall, and on sheets of ice as far away as Greenland. We want to be educational innovators, yet maintain the excellence that a Michigan Engineering education is known for in traditional curricula. The key to doing that is to make sure that the Michigan Engineering educational experience is relevant to the world beyond campus. That's how we can produce future generations of Richard Olsons who will be even better equipped to make a difference.

I look forward to hearing what you, our alumni, have to say about Michigan Engineering education and our efforts to improve. I hope that after reading this issue, you'll see that there's plenty to talk about.

*Dave*

David C. Munson, Jr.

*Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering*

*Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science*