



**Cornell University**  
**College of Engineering**

**Sibley School of Mechanical  
and Aerospace Engineering**

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To: Sibley School Alumni and Friends

From: Lance R. Collins, S. C. Thomas Sze Director  
Sibley School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering

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The arrival of the fall semester and hundreds of new and returning students seems like a natural time to reflect on the status of our school and to share highlights of recent developments here. The past academic year brought changes that will affect the Sibley School for decades to come.

Then Dean Kent Fuchs (now provost) announced last fall that as of January 1, 2009, Theoretical & Applied Mechanics (TAM) and Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (MAE) would be merged into a single department. The repercussions of this reorganization will touch many aspects of our operation and are still being sorted out. An important impact, I believe, will be the consolidation and strengthening of the mechanics area within the College of Engineering. As a result of the reorganization, the MAE group welcomes the addition of 13 outstanding and creative researchers and teachers from TAM. We will keep you posted as this merger continues to unfold.

A wave of faculty retirements is also changing the school's landscape. Jack Booker and Don Bartel have retired within the past few years, and former directors Frank Moon and Sid Leibovich have entered phased retirement with plans for full retirement in the next few years. There are a number of other colleagues approaching this point in their careers, so we anticipate additional announcements in the coming years.

The departure of preeminent faculty members has required the hiring of several new faculty members, including [Yingxin Gao](#) in biomechanics, [Hadas Kress-Gazit](#) in robotics, [Brandon Hincey](#) in controls of energy systems, and, just recently, [Chris Hernandez](#) in biomechanics. Professor Hernandez joins Cornell from the MAE department at Case Western Reserve University.

I am also delighted to announce that [Jane Wang](#) from our TAM side has just been promoted to full professor. Professor Wang's research investigates the unsteady aerodynamics and system dynamics of flying insects. [Steve Strogatz](#) continues to inspire a new generation of applied mathematicians through his popular courses on chaos theory. He recently published a book on his long-term relationship with his mentor and former high school calculus teacher. This past August, we hosted a fantastic 60th Birthday celebration for [Steve Pope](#) that included more than 100

invited guests and ten lectures on diverse topics that touch in some way on Professor Pope's own interests and contributions to the fields of turbulence and combustion. ["Read more"](#) To learn more about the Sibley School faculty and their research, please visit the [MAE](#) web site.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Sibley School's continued success with experiential learning through its project teams. What started with the formula SAE (FSAE) racing car team with Al George 25 years ago has grown into a large enterprise within the department. In 2005 we unveiled the Experiential Learning Laboratory, a remodeled facility in the basement of Upson Hall (where the college machine shop used to be). The facility is home to most of our teams. Among our recent success stories:

- [The Autonomous Underwater Vehicle](#) just won the 12<sup>th</sup> International Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Competition organized by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International and the Office of Naval Research.
- [The CUSat](#) team, which won the University Nanosat-4 Competition in 2007, is poised to send its victorious entry into orbit in early 2010. The ambitious mission aims to launch two attached satellites, which will separate in orbit, after which one will inspect the other.
- [The Solar Decathlon](#) team will be competing on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., October 9-18, 2009. Feel free to stop by and cheer us on.

We look forward to reconnecting with alumni returning to campus for reunions. The Sibley School will host a breakfast at 7:45 a.m. Saturday, June 12, in the Upson Lounge. If you happen to be back, please stop by to meet with friends and faculty.

In the meantime I encourage you to send any news about yourselves, your careers, and your families to [Hilary Diekow](#). Hilary works in Alumni Affairs & Development with a special emphasis on MAE grads. We look forward to learning of your own milestones.

Best wishes,

[Lance R. Collins](#)

S. C. Thomas Sze Director of the Sibley School