Hahn Named Dean of Engineering at the University of Arizona

TUCSON, Ariz. – David W. Hahn, an engineer with more than two decades experience in government, national laboratories and higher education, has been named dean of the University of Arizona College of Engineering. He joins the university July 1.

Hahn is a mechanical engineer specializing in thermal sciences and laser-based diagnostics, including renewable energy, biophotonics and general laser-material interactions. He has published more than 100 archival journal papers and holds 10 patents. Hahn joins the UA after a 20-year career at the University of Florida, where he has served as chair of the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering since 2011.

“David is going to be a great leader for the UA College of Engineering,” said UA Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeff Goldberg. “The college has recently increased faculty and is poised to increase both undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as research output. David’s extensive work with industry and government agencies is going to be critical for developing new partners for research and student placement. Also, David has been an advocate for design in engineering education throughout his career, and this is especially important given the college’s new ideas for a four-year design curriculum and its new Engineering Design Center.”

At the UF, Hahn oversaw so much growth in the mechanical and aerospace engineering program that it became the department with the highest enrollment on the UF campus. Under his leadership, the department built the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Student Design Center, a state-of-the-art complex with more than 4,000 square feet of space dedicated to student design and build activities. Funded largely by alumni donations, the center hosts groups such as the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Solar Gators, Society of Women Engineers and the Formula SAE design team.

“My vision is to proactively recruit and retain a diverse student body, faculty and supporting staff,” Hahn said. “It is well established that diverse teams outperform non-diverse teams. For the UA College of Engineering to reach its full potential, it will require a workforce reflective of our nation. The college looks forward to strong collaborations with the other academic units across the UA campus on large interdisciplinary research initiatives.”

Hahn has been an affiliate professor in the UF Department of Materials Science and Engineering since 2013 and in 2015 was named an affiliate faculty member in the UF Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women’s Studies and Research, where he collaborates with the center director on female student retention in STEM. Prior to becoming MAE chair, he served as the associate chair for academics for three years.

He received the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering 2007-08 Teacher/Scholar of the Year and the 2009-10 Advisor/Mentor of the Year awards, and the UF Society of Women Engineers 2016-17 Outstanding Support of Women in Engineering Award. Hahn is a fellow of the
American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Optical Society of America and the Society for Applied Spectroscopy and, since 2012, he has served on the board of Defensewerx, a not-for-profit fostering innovation in the Department of Defense community.

Hahn began his research career as an NRC postdoctoral associate in the electro-optics branch of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Devices and Radiological Health. He then spent four years at Sandia National Laboratories, first as a postdoctoral researcher and then as a member of the technical staff.

Hahn studied mechanical engineering at Louisiana State University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1986 and a doctorate in 1992. In 2014 he received the Alumni Achievement Award from his home department.

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