

School of Computer Science  
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting  
Tuesday October 16, 2018

Attendees:

Antonie, L., Byart, D., Dara, R. (Committee Member), Dehghantanha, A., Flatla, D. (Committee Member), Gardiner, K., Gong, M (Incoming Director), Hughes, J., Johnston, K., Khan, H., Klotz, G., Obimbo, C., Sawada, J., Scott, S. (Committee Chair), Song, F., Stacey, D., Wang, F.

Regrets

Hosker, C. (Committee Member), Matsakis, P. (Committee Member), Xiang, Y. (Interim Director and SoCS leadership)

Meeting began at 1:36pm.

1. Review of Strategic planning mandate from the college level

- *Sept 10: Dean Wells circulated a memo directing all units in CEPS to under-take a self-study for the purposes of creating a 5 year strategic plan (2018-2023)*
- *Each academic/administrative unit, and three general College-wide committees (faculty, staff, equity, diversity and inclusion, should produce a self-study report that “provides meaningful information to all planning participants that will enable us to look critically and analytically at each administrative unit across the college in order to plan for its future...[it should provide] an overall picture of the academic or administrative unit, the challenges it faces, and the opportunities it might capitalize on to which the plan should respond.”*

2. Review of prior strategic planning efforts and outcomes from the 2012-2017 strategic plan

Issues identified in that 5-year plan included:

- Issues with the graduate program and challenges meeting benchmarks that were set as a result of the recent large cohort.
- Significant loss of personnel and faculty resources due to retirements, resignations etc. while undergraduate student numbers continued to increase
- Issues with the state of the Reynolds building at the time
- Outdated computer equipment

The 2012-2017 strategic will be uploaded to the SoCS wiki so everyone can access for review.

It was noted that we've had a “mixed bag of success” in addressing some of these issues. Obviously a large check box next to the “Reynolds Building”. We have had some success replacing faculty especially with the addition of the Cybersecurity program.

Grad program was noted as still problematic. We currently have 1 old PHD student, approx. 14-15 in the new interdisciplinary program and 40 Masters students. It was also noted that the old benchmark program is no longer in place.

Some discussion around this reported information raised some suggestions for the Strategic Planning Committee to review regarding ongoing needs, including:

- The need for a large teaching or research space
- The hiring of lab assistants and/or lab instructor

As well as:

### *Enrolment*

It was noted that we are getting close but still working to meet current targets. Cybersecurity brought in 1 new staff to replace retirement and two completely new staff. Our current enrollment is approx. 200, down from 250. Issues arise when UofG wants us to take more students but the government wants to cap, as well as province wide quotas.

It was stressed that while growth is good, we need to plan for resources in order to have that growth be sustainable.

### 3. Review of Past Outcomes from Recent (1-2 year) Strategic Planning Committee Efforts

Over the past 2 years, the Strategic Planning Committee, under the leadership of Dan Gillis, conducted two key initiatives that were reviewed in the meeting: Establishment of Fund Raising Priorities to support ongoing fundraising efforts by the A&AD office, and a Study of Academic Expertise Gaps and Opportunities within SoCS to support the ongoing SoCS hiring.

### *Fundraising*

What can we get donors excited about? The following fundraising possibilities were identified.

- Academic entities
- Faculty jobs
- Program Support\*
- Student Support\*
- Infrastructure Capital Project\*

\*Program support, student support and Infrastructure were marked as priorities, currently being actively fundraised for.

Discussion at the meeting identified some potential fundraising challenges identified as unique to SoCS, including:

- Lacking the “pull” (broad public appeal) of units like OVC (where many donations come from animal enthusiasts)
- Being a relatively new program (unlike OAC with alumni old enough to be gifting money in their estates etc.)

It was suggested that we should have more coop involvement in fundraising as well as industry involvement. The benefit of a summer semester was also mentioned, requiring 3 faculty. It was also noted that as a Canadian school, we are perhaps “too nice” when it comes to asking for money (compared to schools in the U.S. with strong alumni donor bases).

The suggestion of hosting an alumni open house in the new Reynolds Building was made.

### *Academic Expertise*

The study identified areas in which more expertise may be needed in SoCS, including:

- Data Science
- Cloud Computing
- Mobile Development
- Web development
- Systems Programming

It was noted that while some of these come from faculty needs, some are from student needs as well.

The study also probed about what areas we should focus our hiring in order to replace department expertise. Study respondents suggested HCI, mobile development and data science. Although we are losing 2 retirements in AI, it was noted that the School is already strong in that area and therefore there may not be as strong a need to replace.

### 4. Brief overview of Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Committee’s fall efforts will focus on data gathering, identifying and contacting relevant stakeholders. This will include a faculty/staff retreat to be held in December, hosted by Dean Wells and the Strategic Planning Committee, more details to come.

The expected timeline for planning outcomes is currently unknown, but David Flatla, who sits on the “Faculty Issues” College-wide strategic planning committee mentioned that the target draft date of the new Strategic Plan is likely February. This date was sooner than originally anticipated.

### 4. Data Gather Input Activity and Discussion

Meeting participants were asked to complete a few questions on an “Initial Faculty/Staff Feedback” handout (see Appendix A), specifically related to the School’s mission and whether we are fulfilling that mission.

The group then discussed several other questions, including who our Stakeholders are.

### *Stakeholders*

We also identified some key potential stakeholders in our department strategy going forward, including:

- Employers who hire coop students
- Feeder high schools
- Other schools or colleges
- Parents of students
- Family of faculty and staff

### *Opportunities*

The group then discussed potential opportunities for the School.

The Cybersecurity program was discussed. It was also noted that we were in a sense “late to the game” when it came to introducing our Cybersecurity Program and going forward we should try to anticipate what the government might deem important in order to build long term careers in the industry.

An undergraduate stream of the Masters of in Cybersecurity was proposed, building on the current proposal, with the idea that SoCS at UofG becomes known as “THE school of cybersecurity”.

The idea of a coursework based Master’s was discussed as many students would like to enter a Master’s program but do not wish to complete a thesis. It was noted that Universities that have had success in this tend to be in larger commuter cities (like Toronto) or offer their programs 100% distance education. Because not everyone wants to live in Guelph, if we want to pursue a coursework based Master’s we will need to be more innovative.

**APPENDIX A – Meeting Handout  
Initial Faculty/Staff Feedback Worksheet**

**October 16, 2018 – Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (open meeting)  
Initial Faculty/Staff Feedback**

**In your own words, please describe the School of Computer Science's mission?**

**How effective have we been in fulfilling this mission?**

**Who are our key stakeholders?**

**October 16, 2018 – Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (open meeting)  
Initial Faculty/Staff Feedback**

**What do you believe are the greatest opportunities for SoCS within the next 3 years? within the next 5 years?**

**In your opinion, what key issues need to be addressed in this strategic planning process?**