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School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 14ᵗʰ, 2020
1:00-2:30pm;
Zoom

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Present –
*Faculty***:** L. Antonie, D. Calvert, R. Chaturvedi, R. Dara, D. Flatla, D. Gillis, M. Gong (Director), H. Khan, S. Kremer, C. Obimbo, J. Sawada, S Scott, F. Song, D. Stacey, F. Wang, M. Wirth, Y. Xiang; A. Dehghantanha, G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, X. Lin, J. McCuaig, P. Matsakis, D. Nikitenko, M. Wineberg;
Staff: D. Byart, J. Harwood, C. Hosker, K. Johnston, J. Lange, A. Nejedly;
Student Representatives: S. Modi;

Regrets –
*Faculty***:** P. Matsakis (on leave);
Staff: G. Klotz (could not get connected), K. Gardiner (recording secretary);
Student Representatives: J. Fraser;

1. Approval of Agenda for April 14ᵗʰ, 2020

Motion: That the agenda for April 14th, 2020 be approved.
(D. Gillis, C. Obimbo)
In Favour: All. Abstentions: G. Grewal, S. Kremer. **MOTION PASSED**

2. Announcements

M. Gong announced that A. Hamilton-Wright has been awarded with tenure and both L. Antonie and R. Dara has been awarded with tenure and promoted to Associate Professor; a congratulations to all.

It was announced that R. Dara's research in detecting the spread of disease outbreak has been getting media attention in the form of interviews by Global, CTV and CBC. M. Wirth has also written articles that have been mentioned in the media, so another congratulations to both.

D. Rea began his parental leave on April 4ᵗʰ, 2020. He has expressed a willingness to provide supports that he previously agreed to.

3. Approval of Minutes from March 19ᵗʰ, 2020

Motion: That the minute from March 19ᵗʰ, 2020 be approved.
(M. Wirth, A. Dehghantanha)
In Favour: All. Abstentions: D. Calvert. **MOTION PASSED**

4. Business Arising from Minutes

M. Gong shared the voting for CIS*2910 discussed in minutes, and that at the time of the vote that we did not have quorum; D. Calvert will talk about in his update.

5. D. Calvert

D. Calvert shared that there has been no major problems with faculty adjusting to optional final exams. Although not all students are happy, given the circumstances it has generally worked out sufficiently.

Academic misconduct is continuing. Suspected misconduct work can still be sent to the Dean's office, as J. Consuelo will be doing online interviews with students.

Paperwork for cirriculum updates on the academic calendar have been submitted; still awaiting feedback. Twp exceptions are:

1) Third year topics course, as it is not defined as the Univeristy would like. Likely to still happen in fall semester.

2) Deleting CIS*2910, moving some of its content into CIS*1910 and create a new third year course. This is held up as Engineering is still considering.

An updated was provided on behalf of L. Gatto who shared that most of the co-op employers for Summer 2020 have withdrawn their summer employment offers. This is problematic as co-op students need a certain number of coop terms to complete their degrees. The University has been working on reducing the number of weeks required to complete a co-op term, however that doesn't help when entire terms are being cancelled as they are. The co-op office is trying to encourage students to study useful technical skills over the summer.

There has also been discussion about the government making some lost wages and financial support available to students, and we should be lobbying for our co-op students to be employed this way. Students could perhaps seek employment with faculty or non-profits who may be interested in hiring students for "free". The option of work-sharing was also brought up, but still waiting on response from co-op office. Minglun will provide updates as he receives them.

D. Flatla asked if students were applying for the COVID-19 funding. D. Calvert noted that they would have needed to have a prior income of $5000 which is possible for some, but problematic as the summer semester is many students' first co-op term. C. Obimbo confirmed the $5000 in income is required as a criteria. There is the potential that the government will roll out a plan specifically for students.

M. Gong noted that the University may reduce the number of co-op terms required for a student to graduate (from four to three terms). This would mitigate the issues arising from the upcoming summer semester. Although this has been approved, D. Calvert noted that students will still struggle as they rely on that fourth semester co-op income.

6. J. Sawada (see Appendix A)

J. Sawada provided an updated on graduate numbers (see Appendix A). In a snapshot, we have 17 international and 37 domestic students. We currently at 55 students. We had 5 students due to start this summer but 4 of those students have now deferred to start in the fall.

The deadline to defend in Winter 2020 has been extended to May 28th, but completed documents must be submitted by May 22nd to avoid paying fees for the summer term.

One student successfully used WebEx to complete their defense. Teams and Zoom are also options for student defenses. It was noted that some countries don't have their English language centres running, but that Duolingo is currently being accepted as an alternative.

A timeline for reintroducing the PhD program was presented (see Appendix A). If we want approval by the Senate by November 30th, then the majority of the proposal needs to be completed by mid-May, then circulated for School approval by end of May. Given the current circumstances. J. Sawada was uncertain if this timeline was realistic, but noted that if we miss the deadline, we will get a schedule for the following Senate date.

S. Kremer noted that he would like to see an analysis of resources required to reintroduce the PhD in CS; questioned if we have adequate support, faculty, student funding, TA funding, etc. He requested these concerns be addressed in the draft proposal. J. Sawada noted that while this is not required for the proposal, we can still create a separate document to address those concerns.

M. Gong asked S. Kremer for clarification on "resources" required as he the program is looking to have no graduate course requirements. S. Kremer pointed out that the program will require resources to run (i.e. modules to complete, students who may need or wish to take courses, seminars etc). He stated that pretending as though this PhD program will draw zero resources is unrealistic.

G. Grewal noted that when completing the proposal for the PhD in Computatioal Sciences, research and funding statistics were required to show that we had adequate funding for TAs. He wanted to ensure that if this new program is approved, is there a way to show that we are not double dipping into funding? M. Gong explained that J. Sawada is looking into this, but we are not asking faculty to separate or choose one program over the other. This will likely depend on the students, their backgrounds and the projects they are working on. He said he is open to different approaches; for example two programs, or one program with two routes for completion. He noted that the goal is to ensure that faculty members have the choice to direct students based on the students' background, free from any "red tape" put into place by the program itself. M. Gong is open on suggestions on how to best implement that.

J. Sawada shared that B. Bradshaw has agreed to write an introductory letter for the proposal, explaining the School's decision to shift from one PhD to another. He also noted that there is nowhere in the proposal that specifies faculty having to choose on program over another. He intends to make the letter as clean and simple as possible, and not add any uncessary details that aren't asked for.

G. Gary expressed concerned based on past experience, especially if the program has two different trajectories. J. Sawada explained that the University doesn't ask how much money is in each program, rather how much money the school has overall.

M. Gong stated that he sees the value of the computational sciences, and if we decided to go with two PhD programs, and there is a concern regarding the number of student jobs, one way to address is reaching to other units who supervise students

in this area (i.e. Geography) and offer a collaboration with them, allowing them to also supervise these students. He noted that interdisplinary research is the future and that means we have options available.

D. Gillis noted that there had been a conversation about updating the existing documentation about our program (i.e. he and J. McCuaig working together qualified as 'interdisplinary' due to stats background) and was curious about the status of this. M. Gong agreed that the change to the existing program was discussed and he should assume the School's support. J. Sawda noted that he felt as though in order for something to qualify as 'interdisplinary', one faculty would have to be specifically outside of SoCS. This policy was based on the recommendation from an external reviewer at the time and hence the university may not be willing to change. J. McCuaig commeted that there was understanding adjunct position can be used to satisfy the requirement, which was why D. Gillis sought for adjuct appointment at Department of Mathematics & Statistics. M. Gong asked whether D. Gillis and J. McCuaig have anything in writing, as he would like to follow up. His goal is to allow all faculty members to have suitable programs to direct PhD students. Hence, he is willing to push for it, assuming there are supports from the School.

7. A. Dehghantanha (Appendix D)

A. Dehghantanha shared changes to the MCTI program and motivation behind them. There were two major issues with the program that were brought up. The first was failing students without enough courses to take (or enough time in which to take them), and the second was students with visas that were only 12 months long. He also shared that he tried to get as many partner programs going in the industry as possible. The Cyber team would be involved in the projects and this would be quite a significant change.

The addition of a special topics course was the first change. This would be used for students who are failing the program. At the moment, we could submit a proposal to have this every year and offer as necessary to students. The second change, given our strong connection to the industry, is to create a Professional Seminar in Cybersecurity course. There are a range of topics that the industry would support, but they are not mature enough. We could leverage industry for this to create a 0.25 credit per term course (0.5 credit for Fall and Winter terms combined). Given the low faculty count to assist in course, the student could take one course in the summer to help meet requirements. Another suggestion was to increase the number of industry contacts in the program, as well as a proposal to add to the number of part time students.

S. Scott noted this is similar to our co-op issue. As it is an intern-based program, COVID-19 will affect it for a least a couple of years. S. Scott asked the status of internships for MCTI.

A. Dehghantna explained that no companies have dropped their internships and all projects are currently running as planned. All of the companies have put into place systems and processes for remote work. As these projects mainly CS and Cyber Security, he does not expect COVID-19 to have any major adverse effects.

D. Flatla expressed an concern if the program potentially doubles or triples in size, at which point courses may take significant amount of effort. He noted that it may be better to

leverage this in the future to bring on more cybersecurity-related faculty. M. Gong noted that the changes apply to the program do not have direct impacts on teaching tasks. However, if the program grows and we end up with more students that qualify us for more faculty, then additional resources will be requested. There has already been discussion about hiring an additional CL faculty in Cyber Security, which would make the program more sustainable. He noted that these discussions are ongoing, but given the current hiring freeze, we are still dealing with unknowns. He reiterated that if the program improves, we will certainly ask for more resources.

> Motion: that the proposed changes to the MCTI program be approved.
> (D. Stacey, M. Wirth)
> In Favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

8. S. Scott – Self-Study Report (Appendix B, C)

> S. Scott provided an update on the Strategic Planning Committee (specifically the strategic plan (see Appendix B, C). She noted that she is looking for a motion about this today regarding the support of the self-study report. She wondered if the school wants to acknowledge that the situation is much different now than it was when the self-study report was started. It is a living document, therefore there must be an acknowledgement and recognition that the plan should be updated as circumstances change.

> S. Modi asked if students were consulted at any time during while conducting the self-study, as one of the big outcome actions was consolation with the students, but a formal invitation was not sent for the surveys or retreat.

> S. Kremer noted that this document will be read by individuals outside of the school, and that his aspiration for it is that higher ups will see that our school is moving forward, addressing issues and will want to provide resources. S. Scott noted that even though the document should and will be shared upwards, it is still a document primarily for internal use.

> Motion: On behalf of the strategic planning committee, it is moved that the council supports the planning actions identified in the stragetic planning principal, with the understanding that individual votes will be called for any changes to SoCS programs or policies, with the support the committee together with SoCS leadership and community members will actively pursue the priorites and actions identified in the strategic plan to enhance our community, our training programs, our research and our reputation.

In order to have as many council members participate in the vote as possible, S. Scott has asked C Hosker to prepare an online poll for the send to faculty and staff, which will be out for 5 working day once sent.

> C. Obimbo asked if we could vote now, but S. Scott noted she wanted it to be as accessible as possible. A. Hamilton-Wright asked why it was a vote in principal versus just a vote. S. Scott explained that her and M. Gong discussed the wording quite a bit and as this is a document is not fully completed with all details and actions, at this time would like the council to support the document's priorities and actions.

> S. Kremer said he liked the in principal and wording regarding separate votes and that because of the e-mail message sent out prior to the meeting said the vote would take place online, that piece should be honoured. He also noted the meeting ended at 2:30pm, so having an online vote after the meeting would be a good idea.

9. M. Gong – update on COVID-19.

M. Gong shared the recent COVID-19 related operational changes. Following the new government regulations, all on-campus buildings are locked. Students are advised not to attend campus unless they have residence here. All construction on campus is cancelled. Faculty and staff can still access buildings but are encouraged not to come to campus. The government may restrict class sizes for fall 2020. We as a school may need to start consider how we will manage this and/or move online, as there is no senate approval needed for the latter. All new research projects need to be approved by the Dean and upwards. This procedure still must be followed. Graduate students can no longer be considered to do any on-campus research at this time.

It was also announced that the cut off for round two of admission offers has been decided. Admissions is trying to not overshoot offers. International students may not be able to start in the fall and we may have strong competition from other institutions.

It was also shared that we have an internation articulation agreement with Dalian Nationalities University (DNU); (Appendix E). However, only one student came to our school from this program, meaning it is being underutilized. M. Gong advised that the program expires as the end of April. If faculty think we should apply for an extension please let M. Gong know. Otherwise, we will let the agreement expire. He noted that the agreement is about articulation program and hence whether it expires does not affect faculty collaboration.

A. Hamilton-Wright asked if there was a guarantee that he could access their offices over the summer semester, with concerns over potential power outages etc and wanted to know the amount of paperwork involved with visiting his office if needed. M. Gong explained that the University is interested in setting up a general policy, and that to date, faculty and staff still have access to their offices. He anticipates access will improve rather than decrease. He said that if we do lose access, there will be an announcement made ahead of time to give everyone an opportunity to take anything home long term from their offices on campus.

10. Any other business.

No other business. Meeting adjourned 2:50pm.