

**School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday January 19th, 2021

1:00pm – 2:30pm

Microsoft Teams

Present –

Faculty: L. Antonie, N. Bruce, D. Calvert, R. Chaturvedi, R. Dara, A. Dehghantanha, D. Flatla, D. Gillis, M. Gong (Director), G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, H. Khan, S. Kremer, X. Lin, J. McCuaig, C. Obimbo, S. Scott, F. Song, D. Stacey, F. Wang, M. Wineberg, Y. Xiang;

Staff: D. Byart, K. Gardiner (recording secretary), C. Hosker, K. Johnston, G. Klotz, J. Lange, A. Nejedly, A. Nguyen, D. Rea;

Student Representatives: A. Kohut, K. Rourke;

Regrets –

Faculty: P. Matsakis, D. Nikitenko, J. Sawada, M. Wirth;

Staff: None;

Student Representatives: None;

1. Approval of Agenda for January 19th, 2021

Motion: That the agenda for January 19th, 2021 be approved.

(A. Dehghantanha, Y. Xiang)

In Favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

2. Announcements

- M. Gong announced that the new SoCS outreach officer L. Zalewski will start on January 25th, 2021. She has a Bachelor of Commerce, Marketing Managing from UofG and currently working on a Masters of Digital Experience Innovation from University of Waterloo. She has 2 years of working experience as Marketing, Recruitment, and Outreach Officer at Renison University College, University of Waterloo.

3. Approval of Minutes from December 15th, 2020

Motion: That the minutes for December 15th, 2020 be approved.

(A. Dehghantanha, S. Scott)

In Favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

4. Stacey Scott

- **Outreach activities and 50th anniversary**
- S. Scott shared that we have a new co-op working with L. Zalewski and herself on outreach initiatives. If faculty wish to have information or events shared on webpage and/or social media, please let them know and they can assist.
- There will be an outreach event over March break, with more information to follow. Faculty will likely be asked to participate as well as student volunteers.
- S. Scott noted that the 50th academic anniversary of SoCS is this year. Planning is to take place in the Winter and Summer terms for a September launch. S. Scott shared some possible ideas including a 50 day campaign “50 days of SoCS”. Due the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, the current plan is an online event. Please share any additional ideas for this event with S. Scott.
- S. Kremer noted that this may present an opportunity to canvas alumni for scholarship sponsorships.

5. Deb Stacey

- **IT planning**
- D. Stacey shared that a short qualtrics survey is being prepared and will be sent out shortly to faculty, staff and students for feedback.

6. Minglun Gong

- **Updates from COAC meeting**
- M. Gong shared that the provost has received student complaints about a lack of opportunity to offer course feedback. The provost would like to encourage faculty members to conduct course evaluations. The feedback of these evaluations may still remain private.
- Questions were raised regarding priority vaccinations for those working on campus. This is an ongoing conversation for those conducting research and/or teaching courses face to face.

- **Data Science program from Math & Stats**
- M. Gong shared that he attended a meeting on Friday January 8th with A. Ali from Math & Stats, who are working on the proposal of a Data Science program and asking for SoCS support with some of the proposed courses.
- It is M. Gong's understanding that there had been a previous vote at SoCS council opposed to the participation in a previous version of the proposed program. It is unclear how successful such a program would be, and the level of support from the university appear to be low. Hence, he is unsure if we should reopen the issue on whether SoCS should be jointly hosting the program. The question now is whether we want to support the program by offering courses they need.
- There are 6 proposed core courses
 - DS*XXX1 Statistics for Data Science
 - DS*XXX3 Data Manipulation and Visualization
 - DS*XXX2 Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
 - DS*XXX4 Analysis of Big Data
 - DS*XXX5 Spatial-temporal Statistics
 - DS*XXX6 Applications of Data Science
- Students would also be asked to take 2 elective courses. The list of selection includes 7 Stats courses, 5 Math courses and 7 CIS courses.
- M. Gong shared his view that we should claim ownership for the CS courses, in particular, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, as they closely match the Machine Learning for Sequential Data processing that SoCS council approved last term. The Analysis of Big Data also matches our Data Science course. He has contacted the two groups of faculty members who can potentially teach these two courses.
- M. Gong recommended provide conditional supports for the program, with the following terms. He is open to council's suggestions and plans to bring a motion at a later meeting after the course proposals for our CIS grad courses are developed.
 - Math & Stats will buy the courses from SoCS (10K per course);
 - The maximum enrollment from Math will be capped at 20 students;
 - If Math students use our elective courses, SoCS should be composited as well.
- A. Hamilton-Wright asked whether the enrolment cap was 20 students in total or 20 data science students in addition CS students, and asked how do we plan on restricting enrolment on the Data Science side. M. Gong explained that the proposed enrolment cap was for data science students in addition to CS students. He assumed that our instructors will need to sign the course enrolment form, which will help

restrict data science enrolment. He also pointed out that SoCS can also tell Math & Stats that if they have more data science students than the enrolment cap, they will have to provide us more resources. A. Hamilton-Wright noted that the enrolment is open and therefore we may not have that much control.

- F. Song noted that 20 could still be a problematic cap number since he had high number of SoCS students taking his course in previous terms. M. Gong said once we offer the course every year for the Data Science program, the demand from SoCS students can be evened out.
- G. Grewal agreed with N. Bruce's comment in the chat that courses in Machine Learning or AI should be owned by CS. He noted that students will be entering these courses with diverse backgrounds, expectations and capabilities, and was therefore hesitant about ownership about the other courses.
- C. Obimbo asked the advantages of owning the courses. M. Gong explained the immediate benefit of additional resources to offer more graduate courses (as was identified in our strategic planning self-study). He also identified a long term benefit that if the program is successful, SoCS could be in a position to argue for more resources (i.e. faculty member in data science).
- C. Obimbo asked if there would be an expectation on students to complete projects in addition to courses. M. Gong confirmed that yes, as the Application of Data Science is a project course. C. Obimbo asked if CS faculty are expected to supervise some of the students. M. Gong explained that the program is not finalized and so much is subject to change, although right now it has been proposed as more of a teaching versus project structure.
- A. Hamilton-Wright reiterated that if students register for the course through the registrar's office, the department cannot prevent 40 math and stats students enrolling into the program/courses. He noted this issue that should be addressed up front rather than afterward the fact. M. Gong said we would offer 1 course for every 20 students in their program. If Math & Stats allow more than 20 students, they will have to provide CS resources to offer additional course sessions.
- F. Song noted that Math and Stats have limited resources to deliver hands on courses and expects courses to be delivered in flip classroom format. M. Gong explained that as long as the learning outcomes are met, no one can enforce how courses are delivered (flip classroom versus lecture) and it is up to the faculty to determine the method of course delivery.

- D. Calvert shared a concern that since there has been a decrease in proposed resources since the initiation of this proposal. He noted that it was originally a collection of courses dedicated to the program but is now a combination of required courses and electives. He noted that students could enter this program with as few as one previous programming course.
- D. Calvert also noted the difference between this and cyber-security, as the latter received funding up-front. He stated that while he supports the program, he would like to see more support from administration.

7. Any other business

- M. Gong asked faculty to remind their graduate students of an upcoming townhall, to which they have already received information.
- No other business. Meeting adjourned 2:05pm