

**Y cowoSchool of Computer
Science Council Meeting
Minutes Tuesday, March 10th,
2020**

1:00-2:30pm, REYN 1101

Present –

Faculty: R. Chaturvedi, D. Flatla, D. Gillis, M. Gong (Director), G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, H. Khan, S. Kremer, X. Lin, D. Nikitenko, C. Obimbo, J. Sawada, S Scott, F. Song, Y. Xiang;

Staff: D. Byart, C. Hosker, J. Lange, K. Gardiner (recording secretary), J. Harwood, A. Nejedly;

Student Representatives: S. Modi;

Regrets –

Faculty: L. Antonie, D. Calvert, R. Dara, A. Dehghantanha, J. McCuaig, P. Matsakis, D. Stacey, F. Wang, M. Wineberg, M. Wirth;

Staff: K. Johnston, G. Klotz, D. Rea;

Student Representatives: J. Fraser;

1. Approval of Agenda for March 10th, 2020

Motion: That the agenda for March 10th, 2020 be approved.

(G. Grewal, C. Obimbo)

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

2. Bill Van Heyst, Associate Dean (External Relations)

Jean Hein, Manager, Outreach

- **Outreach support at College level (see Appendix A)**

B. Van Hyst shared a presentation about outreach support at the college level (see Appendix A). He touched specifically on gender ratios within the college as well as target numbers for enrolment. He explained that his office's focus is not only hitting enrolment targets but also ensuring the students we accept are high quality. He provided an update on the vacant Outreach Officer position; the position closed March 9 2020 and they received a total of 52 applicants of which they have yet to review.

J. Hein also provided the council with an update on current outreach activities happening within the college (see Appendix A). She shared that the Science Olympics is being cancelled this year due to concerns over COVID-19 as well as labour negotiations with between the high school teachers and the provincial government.

S. Modi noted that the nature of the outreach officer's position is to work with students on events such as O-Week, Roboticon etc. and expressed concern over that relationship changing with the new person hired being moved to the Dean's office. B. Van Hyst reassured that the relationship won't change as the person will still be embedded in SoCS (their office will be in Reynolds, they will need SoCS student volunteers for various events etc). He noted the

only change is who is supervising that position and ensuring that outreach resources are appropriately distributed across the college.

S. Scott wanted to note that she was happy to see more effort being placed into balancing ratios across the college. She agreed that while it is important to get students here, it is also important that they are here in the right program. B. Van Hyst agreed that we want students to be in a program where they want to be, set them up for success and that the collaboration between departments within the college is a good thing.

D. Gillis asked if there will be documentation regarding who will be taking on the various tasks the outreach position had previously managed when L. Salmon was in the role. J. Hein asked if there was a document or binder with a list of L. Salmon's jobs; B. Van Hyst replied that yes they do have this information.

B. Van Hyst also spoke to Roboticon, noting that while it is an expensive event to run, we can do fundraising and that overall, we shouldn't be losing events; rather we should be gaining events that fit in with our strategic priorities.

D. Flatla asked about Roboticon, specifically that one of the reasons given for its cancellation was the lack of gender diversity. He expressed concern over cancelling events because of gender and losing some potentially good students from this. B. Van Hyst explained that Roboticon was cancelled due to the late start in planning and that gender ratios were looked at after the fact. J. Hein further explained that the goal for Roboticon isn't equal gender participation, but an increase in females. She also noted that now that we have a year to plan it, there is time to implement various changes based on the feedback received.

S. Scott asked about the overall college structure and whose responsibility it is to help faculty liaise externally (i.e. with industry members). B. Van Hyst replied it would be him. S. Scott asked how his role is different than the University's IRO. B. Van Hyst responded that he would touch base with them and together they would go from there.

S. Modi asked about support for student clubs and if there was anyone at the school currently to manage those relationships. B. Van Hyst explained not that he was aware of at this time but would talk to M. Gong to work out a plan. S. Modi also asked if there was a plan in place to be proactive about planning Roboticon and starting early because of the amount of work required to run the event. B. Van Hyst explained that as soon as the position is filled that person will start working on Roboticon with securing funds etc.

D. Gillis asked that in case the hiring committee is unable to find someone for the position, if there would be funds available to hire a student to help with some of the tasks (for example, managing social media, liaising with admissions). B. Van Hyst said he would support this kind of hire if it were necessary, but with 52 applications he is optimistic someone will be hired full time.

J. Hein also shared that campus day is taking place on Sunday March 29th. She said she will need SoCS students to come out and represent the school and she will begin recruiting those students soon. She also complemented the SoCS students she has worked with so far on various projects and events.

3. Announcements

M. Gong shared the University's policy on the COVID-19 virus. He explained that travel within Canada is still considered low risk, but it has been suggested that non-essential travel be avoided. He also shared that Tri-Council has announced that for any reason a conference is cancelled, or is taking place in an area where there is a COVID-19 related travel advisory, or for any personal reasons a faculty member isn't comfortable traveling to airports, they will cover the cost of these cancellations. Tri-Council has also suggested that any faculty making travel plans purchase cancellation insurance at this time.

S. Modi asked about the potential of cancelling classes or exams. M. Gong explained that we are not yet in that situation and to assume that in the event of any cancellations, the University will make that announcement. He did note that if a student self-identifies as concerned for their own health, the professor is to accommodate that.

4. Approval of Minutes from February 25th, 2020

Motion: That the minute from February 25th, 2020 be approved.

(D.Gillis, D. Flatla)

C. Obimbo raised a question about quorum on the vote that took place at the February 25th meeting regarding CIS*2910. M. Gong and K. Gardiner will follow up on council quorum policies.

In Favour: 14. Abstentions: A. Hamilton-Wright, C.Obimbo. **MOTION PASSED**

5. Business Arising from Minutes

None.

6. Minglun Gong

- **Updates from Dean's council meeting**

M. Gong asked the council if there was interest in having M. Torcoletti from the Dean's office come and speak on the College budget. D. Gillis asked M. Gong if he felt there was a reason for this to happen. M. Gong explained that he did not feel there was a specific reason, but if the council was interested in hearing what the college is spending money on, then M.Torcoletti is willing to come and present on that. D. Gillis asked if M. Torcoletti had a slideshow or presentation that could be shared. M. Gong agreed to check with M. Torcoletti on that. A. Nejedly also pointed out that there was a budget meeting on March 19th but it was clarified by M. Gong that that meeting was being put on by the Provost which is higher than the college level.

M. Gong said he would pass along some of the key information that from M. Torcoletti that affects SoCS and that that point the council could decide if they wanted to have him come and speak in person. He shared that the college had setup a goal to reduce the TA budget by 10%. This goal was partially met by cutting the TA budget by 9%. SoE was accredited by contributing to the cuts. M. Gong checked with C. Hosker and confirmed that our TA spending has been stable for the last two years so SoCS was not a contributor to the overall college reduction.

S. Scott asked about the TA budget in relation to student numbers; she noted that it isn't fair to say we have a stable TA budget when our student enrolment numbers have increased so much in the past two years. M. Gong responded that he can review and compare the TA budget with enrolment numbers for SoCS with M. Torcoletti and report back. D. Gillis clarified that the number of our TAs had not changed not in 2 years and M. Gong confirmed this and also shared that the composite between UTA and GTA has remained stable.

Y. Xiang offered some historical perspective on the TA budget and the last two years of stable spending. He explained that when P. Matsakis was director, a historical debt was discovered for SoCS and the entire department entered into a conserve spending budget, which included TA hiring. When Y. Xiang became director he continued this conservative spending and therefore our past two years should not be viewed as a "regular" pattern of spending. M. Gong agreed that we have no room or intent to cut the TA budget, rather he wants to grow it. He explained that the college wide decrease was attributed to cuts made by the School of Engineering.

S. Kremer noted that this plays into the numbers showed by B. Van Hyst. He explained that SOE had their undergraduate enrolment numbers decrease in the last two years which would explain their decrease of TAs. He said that we need to look at the cost per student and we will see that SoCS has actually lost some of their TA budget. D. Gillis expressed concern about the Dean's office using this data against SoCS for not 'contributing' to the overall TA budget decreasing. He is worried that the Dean's office will enforce a TA budget decrease for SoCS in order to 'contribute' at the college level. M. Gong replied that there was no pressure at Dean's council meeting for SoCS to further cut TA budget. The reason that he checked TA spending at SoCS is to verify M. Torcoletti's claim that SoE contributed to the budget cut.

D. Flalta expressed concern over the organizational chart of the college that was presented in Appendix A. He noted that it keeps expanding while we are losing TAs, which are far more valuable in the classroom than upper management positions. He requested it be noted in the minutes that college funds should be used for TA resources rather than funding these positions.

- **Visit of Paressa Bina from TopHat**

M. Gong shared that P. Bina from TopHat would be willing to speak to the council about their product. He explained that his old University used TopHat but he personally did not and that it was a tool for professors to check attendance and

interacting with students at their lectures. He explained that students would pay a fee per term and can use the tool for multiple courses. He noted that other colleges at UofG are currently using this service and P. Bina wanted to know if our school had any interest in learning more.

S. Modi shared that he has used this tool and does not think that SoCS should adopt it. He cited the fact that students would have to pay, while there are other free technologies available and that he has not found it helpful for collaboration with faculty. D. Gillis pointed out that we are not allowed to take attendance. S. Modi replied that some courses have a requirement of attending every lecture. A. Hamilton-Wright clarified that faculty can't give out marks for attendance but can track.

M. Gong further explained how the tool works based on the demo P. Bina provided to him. During a lecture faculty can post a question and students can respond using their mobile device. Faculty can then see how many students got it right and adjust their teaching accordingly. He noted that this tool may be helpful for larger classes as it allows faculty to see how the knowledge is being absorbed by the students. He also noted that it would be up to the individual professors on whether or not they wanted to use it.

D. Flatla stated he was not interested, which was met by a general consensus from the council.

M. Gong reminded everyone that K. Gardiner had sent out instructions on how to complete ECS claims for reimbursement and showed an example of his most recent claim. K. Gardiner requested it be noted in the minutes that this initiative of faculty completing their own claims rather than the clerk was that of M. Gong's and not K. Gardiner's, to which M. Gong agreed. D. Flatla commented that if faculty start completing their own claims there will likely be a lot of errors. He wanted to know the potential benefit of faculty taking this on this task (for example, will it increase the chances of a full time clerk position). M. Gong noted that we wouldn't be able to use this task as leverage as other faculty in the college are already responsible for their own claims. He explained that this initiative is designed to reduce duplicate work.

- **Further discussion on self-study report**

M. Gong shared the major updates from the self-study report:

1. Added additional undergrad student headcount numbers, now starting from 2010/11 academic year.
2. Plotted additional undergrad student-to-faculty ratio curve when MCTI faculty teaching capacity are removed.
3. Added data for student supervision outside of SoCS.
4. Removed the action plan on "Develop New Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs" since it is the least supported action at the retreat.

5. Added action plan on “Increase GTA budget” since it is the most supported new action suggested at the retreat.
6. Reordered planned actions based on the feedbacks on their importance at the retreat.

D. Gillis asked for clarification; he noted that at the last meeting when talking about the PhD program M. Gong had mentioned about course based masters being off the table, but was now confused as it was present in the self-study report. M. Gong explained that he is not in a rush to implement a course based masters but didn't state it will be off the table, and S. Scott further clarified that people are still on board with the idea but it is considered a long term goal due to a current resources to make happen. She explained that what was off the table was the interdisciplinary masters program.

D. Flatla questioned the title “self-study report” and asked if it will become our official strategic plan. He noted that the name “self study report” doesn't give us concrete plans and asked if we should have a name that reflects what we actually plan to do. S. Scott explained her interactions with M. Wells and the strategic planning committee and that the purpose of the self study is to be a strategic plan but is a ‘living document’ to help focus our efforts, rather than a fixed plan.

D. Flatla expressed a concern with the top down directive approach of the strategic planning committee. He further explained that while he supports what is in the report, he feels as though it does not have enough information or ask enough questions (e.g. about international student targets). He asked if there was a way to send issues and concerns up the ladder.

M. Gong noted that this is a good point however would not happen through the self-study report document. He explained that the self-study report represents the school's own consensus on what we want to do and where we want to go, but we should engage M. Wells to include our suggestions in her strategic planning document. S. Scott added that the self-study report does help document our school's struggles which is important.

7. Any other business

No other business. Meeting adjourned 2:26pm.