

**School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 19th, 2020**

1:00-2:30pm;

Microsoft Teams

Present –

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

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

Student Representatives: S. Modi, James F.;

Regrets –

Faculty: R. Chaturvedi, D. Flatla, X. Lin, P. Matsakis, M. Wirth;

Staff: D. Rea;

Student Representatives: None.

1. Approval of Agenda for March 19th, 2020

Motion: That the agenda for March 19th, 2020 be approved.

(D. Gillis, F. Wang)

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

2. Announcements

M. Gong announced that M. Wells has resigned from her position as the Dean. She has been very supportive of SoCS and M. Gong would like to invite her to our council meeting before her departure and wanted to know of SoCS supports this. S. Scott said she supports this as she would like to hear the Dean's transition plan. M. Gong prepared a wish list for SoCS after he was made aware of her resignation. D. Gillis asked if an interim Dean had been announced. M. Gong said no.

M. Gong announced that we have received e-mail informing us that ECS for the time being is no longer accepting hard copies of travel expense claims. He directed faculty to send receipts to K. Gardiner electronically for submission and that photos taken of "paper" receipts (i.e. from Best Buy) are acceptable for now, but please keep the originals.

3. Approval of Minutes from March 10th, 2020

Motion: That the minute from March 10th, 2020 be approved.

(F. Wang, D. Calvert)

In Favour: All. Abstentions: L. Antonie.. **MOTION PASSED**

4. Business Arising from Minutes

M. Gong provided an update on quorum and it was determined via the Council By-Laws (and confirmed by Y. Xiang and D. Stacey) that contract staff are not considered regular faculty. Therefore, with P. Matsakis on leave, we have 22 regular faculty members, requiring a quorum of 11 people *at the time of the vote*. This would mean that quorum was met for vote on CIS*2910 on February 25th, 2020.

EDIT: Upon further research, K. Gardiner determined that one of the votes on the CIS*2910 motion was in actuality a contract faculty, not regular faculty. Therefore quorum was not met and the vote must be recalled.

5. Minglun Gong

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

M. Gong shared that a resident of Waterloo who tested positive for COVID-19 had close contact with UofG faculty and students at a social event and urged social distancing including all meetings being held online or by phone. D. Gillis asked the details of the social event. M. Gong wasn't sure if he was at liberty to share. He explained that M. Wells and higher administration were meeting almost daily regarding COVID-19. This includes the President who was in charge of Toronto Hospital during the SARS Pandemic. M. Gong shared that the President will create a central news room from which to send updates, and that central communication will come from one voice to avoid the spread of any misinformation. Other chairs in other college have communicated directly to the units, which is no longer encouraged without pre-approval. He further shared that the University will be sending out a newsletter to explain the situation but it is his understanding that anyone who attended the event should have already been contacted by either the University or public health. M. Wineberg asked if there was anyone involved at the social event related to CEPS. M. Gong responded yes.

Regarding the central communication, J. McCuaig noted that it only works if the information is actually sent out in a timely manner and asked if there will be pushback on faculty's behalf on deadlines. M. Gong confirmed yes he will support faculty if the delay is due to information not being distributed quickly enough.

M. Gong also shared an update regarding research. He noted that an e-mail sent regarding international students being sent home was sent to our graduate students in error. It was clarified that the University does not want grad students to be on campus doing research but they are not being sent home internationally. He noted that faculty are not mandated to send their grad students to campus but students can still come in if they want (for now).

M. Gong provided an update regarding undergraduate enrolment. He explained that the grade cutoff was due March 10th for high school students applying. D. Gillis asked about our enrolment targets and M. Gong replied they are at 200. He also mentioned that we can't publish our cutoff average to other Universities due to "trade secrets". S. Kremer noted that we are constantly comparing different admissions between high schools that other Universities (especially Waterloo) have been using. J. McCuaig asked if this number includes transfer students. M. Gong noted it was a good question and wasn't sure. J. McCuaig pointed out that on the power point presentation at the last meeting, two categories were listed (transfer and international students). M. Gong and J. McCuaig agreed to each follow up to clarify.

S. Scott noted that in the self-study, the number of transfer students was looked at. She explained that she did not have the data in front of her but estimated up to 20-30 students. She agreed that they need to be considered in our counts even though they are not currently considered in our cut-offs. She noted that there is a historical record of foreign students (although this may change in future), and that historical records may soon "go out the window" in light of COVID-19. D. Calvert clarified that the college is aware of both transfer and international students counts however they are placed in a different category and not discussed as part of the whole. S. Scott looked up transfer numbers (domestic and international) for 2017 (all programs) which was 25 students, and 33 in 2018. She said it was not clear if all these were all first years, but noted it likely included all years. D. Calvert confirmed it was from all years and that students with years completed are sometimes more successful than those directly out of high school.

M. Gong also shared an update from B. Van Hyst that all recruitment events have been canceled (including campus visits scheduled for March) and that he is trying to move some other events online.

- **Updates from Council of Academic Chairs Q&A session**

M. Gong shared the Provost attended this meeting and reiterated the President's request for centralized communication. She also mentioned that the library may close. For now, they are trying to determine how many students need computers and internet in order to complete their courses.

He also shared an update from the assistant Vice President who has stated that faculty members have the best knowledge regarding the status of their courses. He noted that the University supports different approaches and multiple options on how to change the course outline, student evaluation schemes etc. He also shared that if instructors have collected 60% of the final grade, then the final exam may be cancelled and the weight distributed amongst other course components. He noted that the key is ensure all course materials that need to be covered are covered either by assignments, final projects etc. He also reminded that an e-mail was sent out directing faculty to send their updated course outlines to D. Byart so she can keep track for students who will require it.

M. Wineberg noted that in many courses, including his own, there is a provision that students must pass the final exam in order to pass the course and if this means he still had to execute a final exam. M. Gong said that faculty may keep the final exam, but if they choose not to, then waving the provision is reasonable.

S. Scott shared that during an OpenEd workshop meeting with K. Gordon, the lockdown tool Respondus was discussed, however S. Scott expressed concern regarding the ethics of having camera monitoring of students and asked if there had been any more discussion on this matter. M. Gong responded that he had not heard any mention of ethics or privacy concerns with Respondus.

S. Scott shared that because of her own concern with this, she was planning to give her students an option of either a take home essay or a multiple choice exam and wanted to ensure this was permissible. M. Gong said he would confirm but that giving students two options could result in additional workload for S. Scott and suggested perhaps just offering the take home option. S. Scott noted that a take home exam itself is a lot of effort to mark. J. McCuaig noted that Respondus does not work on Linux OS.

M. Gong also noted that if faculty choose a take home exam option, students must be given 72 hours to complete it. Y. Xiang asked about whether Respondus has to be used for online exams. M. Gong said he would have to check on that. He explained that the function of Respondus is to ensure that when students are working on the exam they are not looking away from the computer, checking their textbooks etc. He noted that an open book exam would help reduce this need. He also shared that Respondus has an option of students taking a photo of themselves with their student ID to confirm that they are the ones taking the exam and that nobody else is in the room.

F. Wang asked when he needed to make a decision regarding his final in order to inform his students. M. Gong said that the decision is to be made by Wednesday March 25th, 2020, which is the due date for a survey. He also received a suggestion from other unit chairs that faculty can reach out to students before March 25th to let them know they are working on a plan for their final.

M. Wineberg asked that if faculty opt out of a final exam and replace with a final assignment, can the deadline for this assignment be pushed to the end of the teaching period (rather than the current one week before). M. Gong said he wasn't sure but would check. M. Wineberg clarified that he was *not* looking to push the assignment deadline into the final exam period, rather just before. D. Calvert explained that the University typically doesn't want assignments to be due just before exam period begins as it could interfere with studying for finals. He noted that this could be different under the current circumstances but suspects that the official policy will remain the same (in that major assignments are not to be due during exam time).

A. Hamilton-Wright shared that K. Gordon is expecting potentially hundreds of deferred exams to accommodate students unable to use Respondus for a variety of reasons.

S. Scott shared that in the communications she has received, there appears to be a provision for pushing assignment due dates back until April 13th, however she noted that the

now the last Friday of classes falls on Good Friday, making the official last class day Thursday, and that she now has a project due on a holiday and is not sure how to proceed. She asked M. Gong to obtain clarification on this. It was also confirmed by D. Stacey that Easter Monday is *not* a statutory holiday for the University.

D. Byart asked that faculty let her know by tomorrow whether or not they want a course evaluation completed. M. Gong explained that any course evaluations must now be done online and that the University is giving faculty a choice of whether or not they wish to proceed with one, and that otherwise the default is to not have one. He also shared that in the same e-mail from UgFA it was stated that even if faculty choose to have a course evaluation completed, they can later choose whether or not to include it in future T&P evaluations.

A. Hamilton-Wright shared that he was looking at using crowdmark for his students as well as leaning towards a long essay answer type exam on design, submitted as a document which can be mined with TurnItIt and submitted as a take home option.

M. Gong provided an update on TA work agreements. He shared that if you are changing the distribution of your TA hours then a new agreement must be made. D. Gillis asked about how the extension of the winter semester will affect the TA contract terms. M. Gong said they should not be working this week (March 16-20) so the assumption is that they will work into the extended period. He also noted that their work agreement is focused on the number of hours worked more so than the dates within which they are working. A. Hamilton-Wright shared that his TAs have been helping him all this week and that if we are going to ask them to work an additional week then they need to be paid for that. M. Gong said that if faculty have been having their TAs doing additional work March 16-20 then they should bring that up. He assumed that TAs shouldn't be working as nothing is due this week (as it is all been postponed, in order to give students time to travel home).

A. Hamilton-Wright said that if TAs were not supposed to work this week that should have been communicated to faculty as they have been helping to work out bugs in the various teleconferencing tools that were sent out to use. M. Gong agreed this was justified and understandable. He noted that they can update the work agreements to reflect the work done and avoid an issues or potential future greivances, but that would be up to the individual faculty.

C. Hosker added that if the faculty are using the TAs differently, they still need to monitor and keep the hours at 140. She also said that it was not an assumption that TAs took off the week of March 16-20, she did not read anywhere that was clear either way and so A. Hamilton-Wright shouldn't worry about them working past the original term date. She also noted that TAs are not doing labs at the moment or invigilating exams, and so their work hours can be distribute elsewhere. She said that if students go over their hours, they can go from there. S. Scott agreed that hours can be re-allocated fairly easily due to the change of workload.

J. McCuaig noted that TAs are asked to work 14 weeks so even if they stay within their hours, adding a 15th week could become an issue. J. Lange will follow up with T. Oakley and report back on these questions. He did note that regarding their contractual appointments, TAs are only supposed to be working until April 22nd and so currently we cannot require them to work past that date. Also, the current signed contracts state 140 hours, so we will have to just hope that the union will allow for any potential extensions.

M. Gong also addressed the summer term. He explained that issues such as coop terms, coop placements, internships and summer courses are currently all on the back burner for the time being while the University figures out how to finish off the winter term. He said a possibility is that all summer courses will be moved online.

- **Feedback on locking down Reynolds Building.**

M. Gong was asked by M. Wells whether Reynolds should be locked during the day, however he noticed that this precaution had already been put into place. He explained that currently staff, faculty and grad students have card access, but it is possible that grad students will lose their access. J. McCuaig asked that if grad students are asked to leave if they will be given an opportunity to remove their personal items from the building. M. Gong said that while we are not at that point yet, his understanding is that graduate students will have an opportunity to collect their personal belongings if the University decides to remove their building access. C. Hosker pointed out that given how fast things are changing, the University may tell us to implement something like this immediately and that perhaps graduate students should be given a heads up just in case. J. Harwood can communicate this to the grad students.

6. Any other business

C. Obimbo asked when the minutes of this meeting would be available. K. Gardiner explained that due to her time constraints it would be mid next week. S. Kremer asked if a summary could be sent out of the highlights as both he and C. Obimbo were not present for the duration of the whole meeting. The meeting was not recorded on Teams; M. Gong and K. Gardiner will discuss this offline.

M. Gong shared that his personal feeling is that the team is working well. He noted that he attended a meeting on Zoom that he found to be successful. A. Hamilton-Wright commented on the variety of teleconferencing tools being used and D. Stacey suggested he and other faculty can speak to OpenEd. She explained that Zoom is quite good and already set up for these types of circumstances.

S. Scott noted that WebEX is meant for 1000+ participants but that Zoom is great and supports up to 1000 participants. D. Stacey said she will put the \$20 for Zoom onto her PDR claim. F. Song also said he has purchased Zoom and asked if he is able to have that reimbursed. M. Gong said yes this is possible and will confirm from which fund. F. Song noted he finds Zoom very convenient. S. Scott also shared that Zoom is recommended for students with poor internet (i.e. in rural areas). L. Antonie

confirmed that Zoom was recommended for classes over 150 students at the CEPS meeting she attended with K. Gordon.

S. Kremer noted that he is currently logged into OpenEd and not seeing the link, asked anyone who has it to copy and paste it into the chat.

D. Stacy shared that at the IT meeting she attended this week, WebEX is failing all over the province, therefore it is a Cisco problem, not a UofG program. She urged that if anyone is thinking about using WebEX for teaching, they should consider alternatives. S. Scott agreed that we may have to get creative. D. Stacey thanked S. Kremer for sharing with them handbreak, which reduces video size, saying it is a great tool. J. Lange posted the link in the chat, found here:

<https://handbrake.fr/downloads.php>

No other business. Meeting adjourned 2:33pm.