

**School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday March 30th, 2021
1:00pm – 2:30pm
Microsoft Teams**

Present –

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

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

Student Representatives: A. Kohut, K. Rourke;

Regrets –

Faculty: D. Gillis, P. Matsakis, M. Wineberg, M. Wirth;

Staff: None;

Student Representatives: None;

1. Approval of Agenda for March 30th, 2021

Motion: That the agenda for March 30th, 2021 be approved.

(C. Obimbo, A. Hamilton-Wright)

**** added

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

2. Approval of Minutes from February 16th, 2021

Motion: That the minutes for February 16th, 2021 be approved.

(Y. Xiang, A. Hamilton-Wright)

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

3. Announcements

- S. Scott, C. Obimbo and X. Lin were congratulated on their promotion to full Professor
- A. Dehghantanha was congratulated for receiving tenure and his promotion to Associate Professor

- T&P committee nominations are complete. D. Gillis and C. Obimbo were thanked for accepting their positions.
- K. Gardiner will be leaving her position at SoCS in May after the financial year end. M. Gong thanked K. Gardiner for her support in the past years.
- Faculty search committee nomination is due tomorrow. Three members have been nominated

4. Joe Sawada

- **External Reviewers' Report on PhD in CS program (Appendix A, B)**
- J. Sawada highlighted main discussion points based on feedback received, primarily whether SoCS should make a more stringent breadth requirement.
- Four possible courses of actions to address the external review were identified (see Appendix A):
 1. No change (no specific breadth requirement)
 2. Add a breadth exam
 3. Complete breadth work by graduate course work areas
 4. Complete breadth work by undergraduate coursework area
- J. McCuaig asked the perceived purpose of having a breadth requirement. M. Gong explained that PhD students graduating from our program should be able to teach a wider range of CS courses at the University/College level.
- J. McCuaig asked for a hybrid option where students must somehow demonstrate breadth but can do so through a variety of ways (i.e. teaching a course). J. Sawada noted that while teaching a course would not demonstrate breadth, anyone who completed their undergraduate in computer science would satisfy this requirement.
- G. Grewal noted that the undergraduate program is a more important basis for breadth than the graduate program. He expressed that for consistency, if we are going to implement a breadth requirement, it should be done so by a standardized exam.
- G. Grewal also expressed concern of putting further hurdles ahead of our students trying to complete their degrees. S. Scott agreed some students may be deterred to apply if there are too many additional courses put in place.

- M. Gong concluded the consensus appears to be leaving the original proposal unchanged. He will work with J. Sawada to prepare the response to review accordingly.

5. Stacey Scott

- **Update from Awards Committee (Appendix C)**
- S. Scott thanked Campus Day volunteers, which took place on March 27th. It was noted that although virtual, when taken into account family members who would have attended in person, attendance was approximately on par as previous years.
- The Awards Committee is currently accepting self-nominations for the Winegard Medal and CEPS College of Excellence grad awards.
- SoCS students Hillary Dawkins and Jason Cenci received the CEPS Dean's Grad Scholarships.
- SoCS students Kassandra Raymond and Angela Kohut received the OGS/QE11 Scholarships.
- S. Scott asked faculty to urge their students to apply for these awards and assist them in their applications, as the allocation of awards is based on the number of applicants received. There are additional upcoming graduate medals: D. F. Forster and Governor General's Academic. If faculty have strong Masters/PhD students, it was asked that they please consider putting forth a nomination.

6. Ali Dehghantanha (Appendix D)

- **Update on MCTI program**
- A. Dehghantanha shared updates on the MCTI program including new advisory board members.
- There will be a call for proposals in the next few days for projects from faculty. These proposals must have some application/contributions to cyber security.
- A. Dehghantanha shared that the current cyber lab (Reynolds 3321) is not suitable due to the size and layout of the room; this is significantly limiting the growth of the program as the current lab can only accommodate 12-17 students; Appendix B. A. Dehghatanha is hoping to gain lab space in the Science Building.

- As of March 2021 the program has 10 accepted offers, 17 offers pending response, 8 applications denied and 68 depending decisions. A. Dehghantanha expressed a hesitation to accept any further applications due to the issues with the lab space.
- **Development of Master of Cybersecurity Leadership Program**
- A. Dehghantanha reviewed the proposed joint program, with four courses from SoCS four from the School of Business.
- SoCS would need to increase the number of Cyber Security courses offered from 8 to 10.
- A. Dehghantanha shared that the proposal includes an ask for one post-grad administrator, an industry liaison and 1 course relief for the program director. He also is proposing a revenue split of 40% to SoCS, 40% to School of Business and 20% to Central.
- M. Gong noted that the new Leadership program is considered as an executive program and has a 80/20 revenue-sharing model, instead of the standard 50/50 model. As a result, SoCS will receive 40% revenue through providing 2 additional courses, which is a good investment.
- S. Scott asked the projected tuition compared to our own Cyber Security program. A. Dehghantanha estimated they would be within a thousand dollars or so of each other
- S. Kremer urged vigilance that the revenue share remains in the proposal; if we are to hire new faculty and the revenue share changes, the School will still have to financially cover the hire's salary.

7. Minglun Gong

- **CEPS restructuring**
- It was announced at the Dean's Council meeting last week that there will be another consulting process put forward with external reviewers. This was unexpected as the previous plan was to submit a restructuring plan to the Provost.
- Y. Xiang explained that in addition to the University's external consulting firm, there will also be a faculty-based internal working group.
- G. Grewal shared a concern that SOE has been working hard on this plan and that SoCS may not have much input at this point in the process. D. Rea shared the same concern, explaining that in his experience, the reports produced often reflect what the University

wants to achieve .

- Y. Xiang noted that when M. Wells was Dean, it was going to go through two rounds of consultation. The second round was to start sometime after January 2020 and list more concrete plans and options for the faculty and staff to provide input. He explained that both the pandemic and the exit of M. Wells as Dean has disrupted this original process
- Y. Xiang shared that he received an invitation to renew his working group membership and felt optimistic that the second process is now underway.

- **Q&A on Fall course delivery planning**

- M. Gong explained that while there is no clear policy on the fall semester, internally the University is looking to requiring all courses that are not DE to have a face to face component (beyond an in-person exam). M. Gong expects there to be pushback from the unions on this.
- It was noted that the University is taking an aggressive approach in order to schedule in person courses to ensure rooms and time slots are booked in the event that the situation will enable face to face learning, and that if we are unable to teach in-person, the transition from in person to online would be easier than the online to in person.
- *M. Gong shared K. Gordon's responses to some of the questions brought forth by the SoCS faculty:*

***Q:** Who is responsible for accommodating students with health concerns surrounding COVID-19?*

***A:** The university is treating the fall like a normal term, therefore COVID_19 will not be considered SAS and the instructor will be responsibility for accomodating the student.*

***Q:** When teaching in a classroom with tech upgrades (camera and microphone) who is responsible for recording, posting the video etc.*

***A:** This will be the responsibility of the instructor, with training sessions in the summer as well as hiring students for the first two weeks to assist faculty. There are also opportunities to automate the posting process through OpenEd.*

***Q:** Do int students have access to Canada vaccines?*

***A:** Yes, once domestic students/faculty are offered vaccines.*

Q: Are students able to take exams remotely, while others taking in-person exam? -

A: All students should take face to face exams; if they are sick and miss it, they will have to apply for deferred face to face exam.

- Many strong concerns were raised by the council. A. Hamilton-Wright noted that if students will not be accommodate with COVID-19, they are likely to attend classes even if they are exhibiting symptoms. M. Gong responded that as the Univeristy does not require sick notes to be excused from class, students will be encouraged to stay home if they have symptoms. A. Hamilton-Wright strongly urged the University to develop policy specifically for COVID-19.
- A. Hamilton-Wright also noted that the public health vaccine rollout does not equate the safety of returning to in person learning as early as this fall.
- D. Stacey asked if the University is taking the opinion that students will be coming back only if they are vaccinated with proof, or if it will be done by honour system. M.Gong has heard no discussion on this but noted that he does not think the University can force students to take the vaccine. D. Stacey shared that the Universities in the U.S. are requiring students to be vaccinated before attending in person classes.
- M. Gong put forward a motion to extend the meeting to further discuss this issue.
Motion: That the council meeting be extended by an additional 15 minutes.
(M. Gong, C. Obimbo) In Favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED.**
- The round robin continued, with various concerns raised regarding contingency plans, whether faculty can choose online over in person delivery, and possible oversights in the return to campus, unknowns of new variants, etc. G. Grewal suggestd we plan for an online offering next year in order to keep our students and faculty safe.
- M. Gong noted that SoCS is improving in our online learning given the experience in the past year. Our faculty, staff, and students are also better adapted to online learning than many other units on campus. However, the Univeristy is pushing for a uniform policy across all units. If the Univeristy passes this and communicates the message to our students, SoCS will be obligated to offer in person learning in the fall. SoCS is not in a position to fight this ourselves, but UgFA as the union could influence the university's

decision.

- S. Scott asked if in person exams would satisfy the in person component, and noted that online exams were the hardest part of online teaching. M. Gong shared that he had asked this question and was told no.
- S. Scott noted the University's lack of consideration of the additional stress and workload involved with planning for both online and in person simultaneously.
- D. Flatla noted that although he personally prefers in person teaching, he is in agreeance with A. Hamilton-Wright, stating that the Univeristy's plan feels "widly reckless" and disagrees with the push for in person teaching in the fall.
- *Y. Xiang asked if the Univeristy has an adhoc committee to address these issues and concerns. M. Gong explained that G. Darlington (Interim Dean) is co-chair of a campus-wide working group, but there is no faculty representative from SoCS.*
- M. Gong acknowledged the frustration and confusing around these issues. He believes there is no need to be stressed about fall term yet, as there are still many pending factors, such as the LOU with UGFA and policy from Public Health.

8. Any other business

- No other business. Meeting adjourned 3:02pm.