

**School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 26th, 2020**

1:00-3:00pm;

Zoom

Present –

Faculty: L. Antonie, 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, D. Nikitenko, C. Obimbo, J. Sawada, S. Scott, F. Song, D. Stacey, F. Wang, M. Wineberg, M. Wirth, Y. Xiang;

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

Student Representatives: A. Murcias Rios, K. Rourke;

Regrets –

Faculty: P. Matsakis, M. Wineberg;

Staff: None;

Student Representatives: None;

1. Approval of Agenda for May 26, 2020

Motion: That the agenda for May 26, 2020 be approved.

(G. Grewal, S. Kremer)

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

Announcement: Memory Tree

- Memory Tree will be accessing Reynolds Building to take video of the renovations, potentially to use for future recruitment.
- D. Gillis asked if videos can be reviewed for accuracy before being used outside of SoCS. In the past, there has been misrepresentation of grad space for undergraduates etc.

2. Approval of Minutes from May 19th, 2020

Motion: That the minute from May 19th, 2020 be approved.

(S. Kremer, C. Obimbo)

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

3. Business Arising from Minutes

4. Minglun Gong

- **Fall planning**
- M. Gong further reviewed the results from the student survey regarding Fall 2020 (see Appendix A)
- D. Flatla asked if concerns over COVID-19 would be considered a legitimate reason for student absence. M. Gong: short answer is yes, however he has been received conflicting information from various meetings he has attended.
- M. Gong: the University will accommodate students who are reluctant to come to campus due to concerns surrounding COVID.
- The perspective from UGFA is that faculty should be able to choose their course deliver method, and should not be required to teach a course twice (in person and online).
- The Provost is pushing for a hybrid delivery model to allow students to have some form of in-person learning experience. As it is unlikely that a vaccine for the virus will be available anytime soon, we should be planning for the long term.
- Provost: because different regions in Ontario have different number of cases, guidelines etc, there will likely be region based directives from the government at some point. Although students travel to Guelph from various outside regions, the Provost still felt that Guelph services a relatively narrow region. The Provost wants to see in-person experience for students.
- M. Gong: we need to first decide lecture format, which is tied to on-campus lecture space. There is a committee looking into classrooms with 100 seats or more, but M. Gong feels that we should be preparing for online lectures. The issue of in-person lab and lab spaces will be considered at a later time. We need to decide by **June 1st** how our lectures will be delivered.
- M. Wirth: Guelph is not isolated, as many people commute in from the GTA daily. If this causes a second wave in September, it will be difficult to pivot from in-person back to online. He stated we should be following what other Universities are doing which is preparing for online delivery.
- D. Stacey: wondered about a hybrid delivery method of both pre-recorded videos as well as live streamed lectures, so students can have some opportunities to ask questions, especially for courses without labs. M. Gong's understanding is that the Registrars' office wants to use this information for the purpose of scheduling; whether a physical

classroom is required for in-person lectures, and ensuring that live-streamed lectures don't conflict with the times of other lectures in a student's cohort. Pre-recorded lectures would not require scheduling considerations.

- M. Gong suggested that if faculty want students to have an opportunity to ask questions beyond their pre-recorded lecture, they should book themselves a lecture "time-slot" through the registrar, which they can then use at their own discretion.
- M. Wirth: It was clarified that the software used for lecture schedules by the University only takes into account core classes, not electives.
- S. Kremer: when the official statement on the fall semester came out, he felt as though it did not help him plan or prepare. He acknowledged that the senior administration is facing a potential loss from tuition, government funding, residence, food services. He felt the best things SoCS can do is create our own plan on how to deliver the fall semester, and should plan on a second wave and to accommodate a non-face to face approach.
- D. Calvert: suggested we "plan for the worse" and strongly suggested faculty sign up for synchronized spots for their courses to avoid scheduling conflicts etc.
- C. Obimbo brought up the issue of privacy concerns as food for thought. We need to be careful recording students and our potential vulnerabilities associated with that.
- **Updates on Spring Academic Open Houses**
- M. Gong thanked S. Scott for planning and acting as producer for this event. During the event, J. Lange interviewed G. Klotz, A. Nejedly and students which was very successful. Our students and faculty volunteers were A. Hamilton-Wright, X. Lin and K. Rourke
- S. Scott and J. Lange have taken over many of the recruitment duties in the absence of a recruitment officer, with the help of a new coop student M. Bergin.
- S. Scott also shared some number data from the online Spring Academic Open House.
- An FAQ from questions brought up at the event will be created for our website for students to reference. S. Scott also stated that we will be utilizing our social media outlets more as our opportunities to interact with students in person is now limited, and if faculty had any suggestions on this to let her know.

- **Vacation on Fridays**
- M. Gong explained that the Dean announced staff members to adopt a four day week work, taking Fridays as a vacation day, effective Friday May 22nd. A townhall meeting will be scheduled to address issues arising from this decision. Faculty are also being encouraged to take Fridays as vacation to show support for staff, however this is not mandatory. The justification is budgetary concerns around “banking” vacation days.
- C. Obimbo: this is a bad idea, as it is asking staff to work harder in fewer days.

5. David Flatla

- **Further discussion on GTA assignments**
Motion: Starting S20, all admitted thesis-based graduate students be guaranteed two GTAs per year for the expected length of their degree.
- D. Flatla clarified that we cannot advertise positions a general TA; due to the online hiring system and pay rates, we have to specify between UTA and GTA.
- S. Kremer: previously, when not all grad students were guaranteed a GTA position, they were still eligible to apply for any “leftover” TA positions. He wondered if by offering two GTA positions per incoming grad student, are we creating less opportunities for our existing grad students. D. Flatla confirmed that unless the GTA pool increases overall, this would decrease the pool for non-guaranteed GTA positions.
- M. Gong added that the number of incoming grad students is also a contributing factor. He will follow up with overall GTA numbers for the fall once he is able to review the data from the last couple of years (from J. Harwood).

Motion: Starting S20, all admitted thesis-based graduate students be guaranteed two GTAs per year for the expected length of their degree.

(J. Sawada, C. Obimbo)

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

6. Any other business

No other business. Meeting adjourned 2:49pm.

