

**School of Computer Science  
Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday May 9th, 2023**

1:00pm – 2:00pm

**Microsoft Teams**

**Present –**

**Faculty:** N. Bruce, D. Calvert, R. Chaturvedi, R. Dara, D. Flatla, D. Gillis, M. Gong (Director), G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, S. Kremer, J. McCuaig, C. Obimbo, S. Scott, F. Song, D. Stacey, F. Wang, M. Wineberg;

**Staff:** S. Brennan, D. Byart, C. Hosker, J. Hughes, K. Johnston, G. Klotz, J. Lange, R. Moroz, D. Rea, T. Waite;

**Student Representatives:** None;

**Regrets –**

**Faculty:** L. Antonie, A. Dehghantanha, H. Khan, X. Lin, P. Matsakis, D. Nikitenko, J. Sawada, M. Wirth, Y. Yan;

**Staff:** J. DeFreitas, P. Patel ;

**Student Representatives:** Students were not invited to this meeting

**1. Approval of Agenda for May 9th, 2023**

Motion: That the agenda for May 9th, 2023 be approved.

N. Bruce, S. Scott)

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

**2. Announcements**

- Survey for retreat to be held at the end of June is due tomorrow (May 10<sup>th</sup>). Colleagues are encouraged to fill in the survey to best allow SoCS to accommodate for the retreat.
- CIS6370 is being offered in the summer to fulfill a recognized need for a summer grad course. However, the enrolment is low. If there is not sufficient enrolment in the summer offering, that may influence the offerings for non MCTI courses in the summer moving forward.

**3. Approval of Minutes from April 25th, 2023**

Motion: That the minutes from **April 25th, 2023** be approved.

( S. Scott, N. Bruce)

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

**4. Stacey Scott**

## **Updates on Graduate related issues/reminders (Appendix A)**

S. Scott, as the new Associate Director of Graduate Studies, presented current Grad enrollment stats, with 51 domestic and 20 international students. She also opened a discussion on grad student funding by showing the current minimums and available funding supports, which are not keeping pace with inflation. Faculty were encouraged to consider a reasonable funding package above the minimums.

S. Scott emphasized the OGPS requirements for planning PhD and MSc defences are 8 weeks and 4 weeks respectively. Faculty are urged to plan ahead and encourage students to avoid last minute crunches.

Regarding the External Examiner approval process, raised at a previous Council meeting, S. Scott reported that the Progress Committee have been discussing it and will be clarifying the assessment criteria and streamlining the process.

R. Dara inquired if there was any way to guarantee an international student would spend more time doing research if they were offered higher funding. S. Scott reminded that there is no recourse if the student is being paid through the GRA process as it is not a salary. C. Hosker added that there is an alternative option to the GRA1, which is a GRA2, and that is more like a salary, with vacation and benefits, and would be more enforceable to ensure the work is completed. C. Hosker added that she is available for Faculty to discuss options for funding on a case by case basis.

S. Scott reminded that as NSERC applications have increased due to Covid delays, an early start to the process is recommended. She extended her support for any Faculty member that needs help with the process, including the new EDI component.

M. Gong reported that there was discussion at higher Admin about setting up higher funding packages for PhD students. Currently, Chemistry offers the highest package, with roughly 28K year for 4 years with 15K GRA + 2GTAs. Physics is almost as high, with 27+K year for 4 years: 15K GRA + 2GTAs. Math & Stats is next at 26,500 year for 4 years: min of 8K GRA, 2GTAs + growth (7,200). SOCS is using the minimum as required by OGPS.

## **Judi McCuaig**

### **Creative ways to improve teaching support for large classes (Appendix B)**

J. McCuaig described her experience with hiring a course-specific tech support student in the last 2 semesters. This hire had no teaching assistant duties and focused entirely on IT tasks (installing software, resetting passwords etc), working closely with SoCS IT team. She reported that it was very successful and would like to continue with this endeavour. M. Gong expressed his support for this and other ideas while minding the rules that govern TA hiring.

In response to questions from faculty, J. McCuaig stated that the Tech Support worked mainly on Teams but with some in-person meetings, they assisted only with IT issues and the regular TAs were instructed to refer IT issues to the Tech.

## **6. Minglun Gong**

### **Updates from Dean's Council Meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

M. Gong highlighted issues from this unique meeting which dealt mainly with strategic planning consultation. The format consisted of 6 questions from the President, which were discussed at the meeting by the Dean's Council:

Q1: How to deepen our global impacts.

Q2: How to improve IEDI

Q3: Initiative for improve student experience

Q4: How to champion sustainability on day-to-day work

Q5: How to help faculty and staff succeed

Q6: Opportunities for digital transformation and increased capacity

These were the same questions asked at the Spring Social and the President is asking for feedback directly from the university community as well. If you have any feedback on these questions, M. Gong will pass on your feedback, or you may send your response directly to the President's office.

M. Gong highlighted that the President commented on the importance of ChatGPT so he enlightened her how AI may change both teaching and research for academia. She expressed her interest in hearing our school's ideas and considering how to incorporate AI into work at the University.

### **Updates on SoCS Growth Planning**

M. Gong reported that the University has once again increased our enrollment plan to 300 but this will be accompanied by 2 new faculty positions, 1 regular and 1 teaching focused. Nominations for search committee is due tomorrow. He argued to the Dean that a sustained increase to 300 incoming students would require hiring 13 faculty members in the future.

### **Consultation on faculty hiring areas and the search process**

M. Gong clarified that there are 4 faculty positions to be hired, 1 CL in MCTI to support as C. Obimbo and X. Lin start sabbatical in F23, 1 F. Wang's replacement for AI and Big Data, and 2 new positions, 1 regular (hiring area to be discussed) and 1 teaching focused. M. Gong

suggested, after consultation with S. Scott and N. Bruce, that the hiring area for the 1 regular position be in AI and Software Engineering. He remains open for discussion on other priority hiring areas.

D. Flatla inquired about the faculty hiring area survey result that showed HCI as a priority and though not opposed to an AI hire, asked about a hybrid position. M. Gong clarified that he is open to hiring HCI and explained his reasons for suggesting SE is because our SE courses are demanding and are difficult to fill.

M. Gong then proposed to combine the 2 positions into 1 advertisement and use 1 search committee, made up of N. Bruce, R. Chaturvedi and S. Scott. He welcomed discussion on this as well as appointment of any willing faculty to the other 2 open spots on the Committee.

D. Flatla commented that there may be opportunity for SOCS to have influence with the University, given our knowledge and expertise with AI, as ChatGPT makes its way onto the watch list of many. M. Gong affirmed that in his conversation with the President, he highlighted it's potential for use in research and teaching, and that she proposed further discussion with our school moving forward.

## **6. Any other business**

No other business.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15pm.