

**School of Computer Science  
Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday September 21, 2021**

1:00pm – 2:30pm

**Microsoft Teams**

**Present –**

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

**Staff:** D. Byart, J. DeFreitas (recording secretary), C. Hosker, J. Hughes, K. Johnston, G. Klotz, J. Lange, A. Nguyen, D. Rea;

**Student Representatives:** S. Adi, A. Kohut;

**Regrets –**

**Faculty:** R. Chaturvedi, H. Khan, P. Matsakis, J. McCuaig, D. Nikitenko, S. Scott, M. Wineberg;

**Staff:** L. Zalewski;

**Student Representatives:** None;

**1. Approval of Agenda for September 21, 2021**

Motion: That the agenda for September 21, 2021 be approved.

( C. Obimbo, N. Bruce )

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

**2. Announcements**

Minglun announced several leaves in the department: Y. Xiang, J. McCuaig, and F. Wang are taking 4-month sabbaticals this Fall. S. Scott is taking an 8-month sabbatical for both Fall and Winter. R. Dara is scheduled to take sabbatical in Winter. As well, P. Matsakis is experiencing a health problem and is taking medical leave.

Minglun stated that Y. Xiang and J. Sawada will continue to serve as Associate Directors for Undergrad and Graduate Associate Directors this year. He noted that Y. Xiang agreed to serve in this role during his Fall sabbatical, which is greatly appreciated. D. Calvert will continue to serve as the Chair for the Undergrad Curriculum Committee. A. Dehghantanha will continue as the Cybersecurity Program Director. S. Scott has stepped down from the Assistant Director position due to her sabbatical. Minglun thanked Rozita Dara for agreeing to serve in this position.

Minglun announced recent awards in the department. X. Lin was honored with two awards by the IEEE Communications and Information Security Technical Committee (CISTC). They are the Yearly CISTC Technical Recognition Award and Yearly CISTC Outstanding

Service Award. Congratulations were offered to him. J. Sawada was appointed as the Section Chair for the NSERC CS evaluation group.

Minglun added a reminder that Jacqui is in the office Tuesdays from 8-10am if there are any on-campus issues that she can assist with. As well, the Holiday Schedule was announced with the University closure beginning on December 24<sup>th</sup> and reopening on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. Approval of minutes from June 29, 2021

Motion: That the minutes from June 29, 2021 be approved.

(D.Flatla,, N. Bruce)

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

### 4. Joe Sawada (Appendix A)

- **Grad Enrollment**

J. Sawada reported that there are 12 new students coming into the Master's Program this Fall, 9 with thesis based Masters and 3 with the AI option, 1 new PhD in Computer Science along with 4 students who may transfer in. There will be 5 new students in the PhD Computational Sciences. The total will be 18 new students this Fall.

- **New PhD.CS and transfers**

J. Sawada updated that the PhD.CS program formally approved by Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance on August 20, which allows SoCS to take students into the program and begin transfers over. He thanked J. Hughes for updating the Web site with the link in the attached Appendix and shared that the Wiki was updated with a new student handbook for PhD.CS..

J. Sawada advised to check the email from Jennifer if anyone wishes to transfer a student from PhD.CSCI. He reminded that the new PhD CS is a 4 year degree unlike the 3 year CSCI and added that funding should be for four years from the start of their degree as both RAGS and IDTS provided by the University are good for up to four years.

D. Gillis questioned that, for PhD in Computational Sciences, the Co-advisor requirement being from outside the department, the challenges it poses and if there will be any changes to the restrictions. J. Sawada will bring these concerns to the curriculum committee.

M. Gong asked if there would be any additional course requirements to transfer into the program. J. Sawada responded that the requirement for the PhD CS is CIS\*6890 plus 2 Graduate courses.

C. Obimbo asked if the Co-advisors would remain in place after a transfer. J. Sawada replied that it would be up to the supervisor as it would require the creation of a new program form outlining the courses to be taken and the set up of a new advisory committee. He pointed out that there is no need for a co-advisor with the new PhD.

- **Move CIS\*6890 to summer**

J. Sawada reported that almost half of the incoming research based graduate students start in Winter and Summer and these students frequently request summer courses for progress in their program. He added that non-MCTI summer courses have not been offered for many years, except for reading courses, due to resource constraints. He stated that this was the reason for the proposal to move CIS\*6890, the technical communications course, from Winter to Summer, in a condensed, 6 week format in May-June.

M. Gong agreed that it would be a good idea to offer summer graduate courses. It would spread the workload over 3 semesters. M. Gong added that in the long term, we may consider organize a research forum with the course, so that students would have an opportunity to present to faculty and other students thus promoting research at SoCS.

C. Obimbo asked about students who want to take all their courses in 2 semesters in order to start their research right away, or if the majority needed the extra semester. J. Sawada replied that 40% of students are now starting in the winter or summer.

Andrew Hamilton-Wright stated in chat the number of courses is not increasing. M. Gong agreed the grad course offerings need to be increased but is constrained by resources.

L. Antonie wondered if moving CIS\*6890 to summer would cause issues for some students that might do internships over the summer. M. Gong agreed that that would be an issue and asked if there were many students that accept an internship in their 1<sup>st</sup> year. L. Antonie responded that the goal was to support the graduate program by encouraging opportunities to collaborate with industry and moving a required course to the summer will restrict student options. M. Gong considered whether offering CIS\*6890 as an online course would help.

D. Flatla commented that moving CIS\*6890 to the summer would delay student's research. M. Gong asked if students are ready to do research that early in their studies with only 2 or 3 completed courses. D. Flatla responded that he personally did not find some of the courses useful for his students' research. J. Sawada clarified that students need to take courses outside of their research area to broaden their knowledge, of which CIS\*6890 is very useful.

M. Gong will take a proposal of replacing CIS\*6890 with an internship option back to the Graduate Committee for discussion. He decided that CIS\*6890 will remain in W22 as they explore more options. In planning for the 2022/23 academic year, he said that the goal is to add more graduate courses but staffing shortages due to sabbaticals will present a challenge.

M.Gong shared a slide (Appendix B) showing the number of graduate courses offered from 2013 to 2021. Attempts have been made to increase offerings by adding Special Topics. The limitation to regular courses is staffing and the number of SRL requests. J. Sawada noted that the special courses include reading courses which have limited enrollment to just a few students and are not useful for everyone.

N. Bruce in chat asked about the option for offering cross-listed grad and undergrad courses. J. Sawada replied that faculty have previously raised this issue, as having grads in their courses increases their workload. C. Obimbo recounted about past cross-listing and the value of the credit that the grads receive. S. Kremer added that it was not too complicated to do and M. Wirth agreed. M. Gong pondered how to recognize the additional teaching effort by the instructors. He stated that the upcoming Cyclical Program Review process will allow for discussion of this issue.

M.Gong shared a slide of Graduate course enrollment (Appendix B) which shows a stable section size while total enrollment is increasing. If section size shows an increase this Fall, it will support the argument for more resources for the graduate program.

J. Sawada added that MSc students are able to take 1 undergrad course as well as 1 grad course outside the program to satisfy their course requirements, with permission.

## 5. Minglun Gong

- **Updates from special Senate meeting on Sept 2<sup>n</sup>**

M. Gong reported on a special Senate meeting called on September 2nd to discuss a motion proposed by a group of Senators. It asked the Senate to temporarily give the decision on the delivery of courses to Units. It states:

"Resolved that, for the F21/W22 academic year, Senate temporarily approves fully remote, non-distance education course formats, asserts that instructors are the best qualified to determine the manner in which they will teach their courses, and affirms that oversight of course formats should occur primarily at the departmental/school level."

M. Gong explained the process that the instructors decide how to deliver the course, the Chair or Director confirms that the course learning outcomes will be met by the proposed format and it would not need higher approval from there.

M. Gong stated that because the University's policy on 60% in-person course delivery does not recognize the differences among disciplines and the preferences of students in different units, he supported the motion and joined the group, along with D. Gillis, as the motion allows him to make decisions at the unit level.

He reported that at the Senate meeting, the Provost proposed to refer the motion to the Committee on Bylaws & Membership with respect to the jurisdiction of Senate, and to the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies with respect to the substantive question.

M. Gong updated that on Sept 13th, Senators were informed that UGFA and the University agreed to resume negotiations regarding a letter of understanding (LOU) which significantly engages matters contained in the motion. In addition, the University claimed that the motion has been identified as outside Senate's jurisdiction and hence the motion cannot proceed.

D. Gillis shared that as a participant at this Senate meeting, he observed that the mood was hostile to the motion. Although it was sent to 3 sub-committees, Senate regarded the motion as illegal considering the negotiations with UGFA. D. Gillis noted that the positive outcome was the return to negotiations.

- **Updates from COAC meeting on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>**

M. Gong reported that over 24,000 people have registered their vaccination proof, of which 94% are fully vaccinated, 5% are partially vaccinated, having the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot by the end of the month and only 1% of them are applying for medical/religious exemption. He noted that the Provost assured everyone that when a student is waiting for exemption to be approved, he/she cannot get to campus. A student with an exemption needs a negative test to come to campus. Without an exemption they need to ask their program counselor to either take remote courses only or get vaccinated.

M. Gong explained that home testing kits are available for persons that have only 1 shot or have vaccination exemptions, after which they upload the result. Student Health office can also perform the tests.

M. Gong reported that the University has hired and sent classroom monitors to individual classrooms. They will help to explain the requirements of masking and social distancing to everyone attending the classroom. For courses that have delayed in-person delivery, the monitors will visit when the class resumes in-person. Faculty with delayed start dates should inform M. Gong or G. Klotz of the return date to facilitate scheduling of the monitors.

M. Gong addressed concerns about students not following the rules and he informed that a Faculty member can call a compliance officer if there are students not following the rules. He relayed that the Provost emphasized wearing a mask is mandated by Public Health. If a student removes their mask during an in-person exam, they will be removed from the exam and receive 0 since he/she has seen the exam. The Provost also notified everyone that there is an active COVID call center with 3 staff members.

C. Obimbo asked for the frequency of testing and about enforcement of mandatory vaccinations. M. Gong advised that, as per the Provost, the instructors will not know the vaccination status of a student but to be assured that students not fully vaccinated are required to be tested every 3 days to access campus. M. Gong indicated that the requirements of document submission relies on student self-regulation and he was not privy to the method for enforcement by the University.

D. Gillis added that in his experience, the University has not been open and transparent as they claim to be. He revealed that rapid test kits that were to be provided to unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students, were not delivered to them for the 1<sup>st</sup> 10-12 days of the semester, due to a supply issue. Dan expressed that the information should have been broadcasted so that others in the community could make a choice about their actions during that time. He added that the uploaded vaccination documents are, to his knowledge, only randomly verified with no indication as to the frequency of the spot-checks.

D. Gillis indicated that the report of 95% fully vaccinated stat was based on a number of students on campuses and not on the total number of students, as there are thousands who have not uploaded documents. D. Gillis informed everyone about the emergence of a discord channel, frequented by 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students who communicate about Covid non-compliant activities on campus. He explained that, with this knowledge, individuals in the University community could make informed decisions about their health and wellness.

M. Gong agreed that everyone should take any and all precautions to protect themselves.

- **Updates from Dean's Council meeting on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>**

M. Gong briefed that Acting ADA Dan Thomas has replaced Karen Gordon who is on Administrative Leave. He updated on undergrad student enrollment which has 159 in SoCS CS including 21 transferred, 64 in SE including 1 transferred, and 2 in the General Program. Among these students, 4 CS and 9 SE students are not yet registered for any courses as of Sept 16<sup>th</sup> and are considered part of the summer melt, which brings the final enrollment number to 212. University wide, the total number of registration this year is 98% of last year, hence, the tuition revenue will be slightly lower than last year.

M. Gong advised that as per Dan Thomas, if a course has either lecture or lab with a F2F component, then instructors can request a F2F exam. Totally remote courses cannot request F2F exams and must choose remote assessment options.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Program Counselor and handling of misconduct cases**

M. Gong informed that, since April has left her position for a permanent job on campus, an attempt was made to argue for a permanent position. This was supported by the Dean's office, but the request was rejected at HR. Another 1-year term position is being

filled, interviews were conducted last week September 13-16 by Cathie and Greg and an offer is being made this week.

C. Hosker clarified that the position will run until July 2023 with a start date of mid October.

M. Gong advised that G. Klotz will handle student counselling himself until then, but there will be a lack of support on handling misconduct cases. M. Gong indicated that Kyle and Dana agreed to help by using MOSS to check students' assignment code. They can also generate graphs that visually demonstrate lines matched and percent similarity between 2 submissions, and pass those on to the instructors, however, they do not have capacity to generate full reports.

K. Johnston added that instructors can upload submissions to <https://sneakoscope.socs.uoguelph.ca/> or if they need help setting up their course with MOSS to contact the IT Help team at [help@socs.uoguelph.ca](mailto:help@socs.uoguelph.ca).

M. Gong advised that instructors have 2 options: if similarities in submissions or potential misconduct is suspected. Either they can give an unofficial warning to the offenders that the conduct is unacceptable, or they will need to prepare the report by themselves found here on the CEPS website <https://www.uoguelph.ca/ceps/faculty-staff/academic-misconduct-reporting>.

S. Kremer stated that that unofficial warnings are counter to the University's policy and asked for clarification of the rules.

Y. Xiang detailed that discussions with Dan Thomas about this subject and the lack of an Academic Integrity Officer to undertake formal reporting, that the beginning of the semester should be used as an educational exercise to give a warning but not a penalty since there will be no full investigation. In a severe case, instructors have an option to submit the misconduct report with evidence to the Dean's office. As it is a complicated process, Y. Xiang offered to assist if needed.

- **Hiring for David Cjiu's replacement position**

M. Gong notified that the process to hire will begin with a call for nominations to form a new Hiring Committee and repost the position.

C. Obimbo asked if it would be possible to have a back-up hire in case the 1<sup>st</sup> choice does not work out. M. Gong explained that due to the unusual circumstances of the pandemic hiring, the fall back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate did not occur at the advice of the Hiring Committee who advised to extend the offer to the 1<sup>st</sup> candidate. He does not expect this situation will occur again.

- **Access to Graduate pods**

M. Gong advised that respecting provincial guidelines requires the School to minimize access except for instructional purposes. Access to grad students' offices are not considered as essential instructional purpose. Dean's Council reported that different units use different approaches for managing social distancing with some asking grad students to manage the access themselves. M. Gong has been managing requests for access as there are not many. So far he is able to limit only 1 student to use each grad pod on a given day.

D. Gillis asked in chat about ventilation testing in the grad pods and M. Gong replied that it has not been tested, only public spaces such as classrooms and labs have been completed. He will follow up on that question. He will consider 1 student per day in the pods to be safe.

- **Update on Fall TA hiring**

M. Gong thanked Josh and the Hiring Committee for their hard work. He highlighted the issue this year that due to an increase in the number of GTAs, they will be working in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses. This will require a closer look in the future but it is a good indication that the grad program is expanding.

## **6. Any other business**

In response to a comment in chat, M. Gong indicated that all course delivery in Winter is expected to be in-person.

No Other business. Meeting adjourned at 2:32pm.