

**School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 23, 2018
1:00 – 2:30PM, MCKN 310**

Present – Faculty: L. Antonie, D. Calvert, R. Chaturvedi, D. Chiu, R. Dara, D. Flatla, G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, S. Kremer, P. Matsakis (Interim Director), D. Nikitenko, J. Sawada, F. Song, F. Wang, M. Wineberg, M. Wirth, Y. Xiang; **Staff:** D. Byart, C. Hosker, J. Ilic, G. Klotz, S. Mousseau (Recording Secretary); **Student Representatives:** J. Fraser, P. Houlding

Regrets – Faculty: D. Gillis, X. Li, J. McCuaig, B. Nonnecke, C. Obimbo, S. Scott, D. Stacey; **Staff:** K. Johnston, D. Rea, L. Zweep

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the agenda be approved (D. Calvert / A. Hamilton-Wright)
In favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

2. Approval of Minutes from Jan 9, 2018

Motion: That the minutes from Jan 9 be approved (S. Kremer / D. Nikitenko)
In favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

3. Interim Director's Remarks – Pascal

URAs and USRAs

Priority for the allocation of these awards is given to new faculty.

CL Position

20 applications were received by the deadline and 3 candidates have been shortlisted and interviewed. The Search Committee will reconvene on Thu Jan 25 to discuss the interviews and rank the candidates. P. Matsakis feels this should be an easy process; he knows of at least 1 candidate he does not want to hire and 1 that he does want to hire.

THRN 2418

A rough layout for the renovation of THRN 2418 has been completed. A glass wall will be installed so that the noise from the atrium is blocked out. Two projector screens will be installed on that wall, one on each side of the pillars. There will also be a new double door with a card reader to control after-hour access. The Dean seems happy with the proposal and the price is reasonable. P. Matsakis is confident that the renovation will move forward.

4. Graduate Curriculum Committee – Stefan

Motion

That the PhD Learning Module on Data Management be accepted as circulated, with one friendly amendment (add an awareness of file encoding issues). (S. Kremer / G. Grewal)
In favour: All. Abstentions: None. **MOTION PASSED**

MSc in Computational Sciences

At the latest meeting, the Committee brainstormed in which direction they should proceed next. They are looking for feedback on whether the idea of a new MSc in Computational Sciences is worth investigating. Since we have a new innovative interdisciplinary PhD in Computational Sciences, what about doing the same thing at the MSc level? Students come out of their undergraduate degree wanting to do the kind of work that PhD students are doing — but not at that level.

G. Grewal responded that the School was almost forced into the PhD program. He added that they had a clear objective when creating the program and asked what the objective or drive is for the creation of an MSc in Computational Sciences?

S. Kremer said that the PhD is a great program and something we might already be doing in MSc — but not on paper. He suggested it might attract a new group of students.

G. Grewal said that when he went to grad school he was looking forward to the lectures, but now there's less and less attendance. He suggested that a course-based program might be more beneficial. S. Kremer responded that this is a different issue, but maybe the Committee can explore.

M. Wineberg contributed that the idea came about as they were discussing where the PhD students are coming from. If we had an MSc in Computational Sciences, we would have students proficient in two areas and they could be introduced to the PhD program. D. Flatla added that it could be a good offering for a student not doing well in the PhD program; they could fall back on the MSc program.

M. Wirth said that it is a good idea, but he's concerned about the resources, since there is currently a struggle with the number of programs and faculty members. S. Kremer responded that the Committee would consider this as the program is developed. He added that they think the cost would be quite low. He asked if this is something that should be fleshed out a bit more before coming back to the Council.

D. Calvert asked after the number of faculty members who would consider working within this new program.

P. Matsakis said that the timing is bad. It's too early to start planning something new while we are developing the cybersecurity program. He also added that there is a new Director coming in and this should be discussed with them. He suggested the idea be put away for a few months before bringing it back out.

S. Kremer thanked everyone for their input and said that a survey would be put together to gauge feedback. If the feedback is positive, once the new Director comes in, they will present the new idea to them. G. Grewal added that he would like to discuss student engagement in the material as well.

Core and Optional Courses for MSc in Computer Science

Our grad course offerings are unpredictable and inconsistent. Many of our courses are never offered and some are outdated. Some courses have been unavailable for 8-10 years. We could offer more core courses on a regular basis, but we might not have enough students in them to make it worthwhile.

The Committee is suggesting that two core courses be offered in the fall and winter terms, where each course would be composed of two-week modules taught by specialists in the field. All MSc students would take these two core courses and two specialized courses in their areas of interest. This way, faculty could teach special topics suited to their research specialties and students would still get a core background in advanced computer science.

M. Wirth offered that finding people to teach the modular courses could be tricky. How would this work with regard to the faculty DOEs and teaching assignments? P. Matsakis said that a few years ago we could not offer many grad courses, but this is not really an issue now. He agreed that we need to offer core courses on a more regular basis, but he doesn't think that splitting a course into so many modules is a good idea; you can't do much in two weeks. He went on to share that he personally wouldn't want to split a course into more than two topics.

J. Sawada suggested that the calendar descriptions need to be cleaned up. He also offered that it has been difficult to tell what courses are being taught. P. Matsakis said that the list

of all teaching assignments is emailed to the School six months ahead of time, but he acknowledged that the description of the special topics courses is not. M. Wirth responded that this should be the case, but this information is hard to get from faculty. J. Sawada responded that it would be really helpful if we could fix this. He also suggested that one or two summer grad courses would be good to have. G. Grewal responded that there are quite a few grad courses in engineering and math/stats.

P. Matsakis said that we cannot afford summer grad courses at this time, but the Provost is considering the idea of offering a summer academic semester. He suggested we should offer a small number of core courses — perhaps 2 core and 2 specialized courses per term. The Committee could also go through all the courses and do some clean-up. Then we can discuss if it's worth bringing in new courses or modular courses. J. Sawada added that cybersecurity will add 6 grad courses to the calendar.

S. Kremer wrapped up the discussion by adding that he will talk to the Committee about cleaning up the calendar and discuss the level of granularity for modular courses.

5. Associate Director's Remarks, Undergraduate Studies – Gary

Academic Integrity

As per P. Matsakis' request, G. Grewal presented an update on Academic Integrity from F17. The members of the AI Committee were D. Audich (AIO), D. Rea, R. Chaturvedi, and G. Grewal. There was a total of 61 cases across six courses involving 137 students. Most cases involved pairs of students, but there were some larger groups and individuals. K. Mooibroek provided F16 numbers from the Dean's Office for comparison. G. Grewal noted that the majority of the students involved come from SoE rather than SoCS; there are more SoE students in the courses than CS students, but proportionally more cases with SoE students nonetheless. In one case in F16 where there were more CS students than SoE, it was due to a leaked exam; once that anomaly was removed from the data, SoE students again composed the majority of cases. G. Grewal added that of the 137 students investigated in F17, the majority were found guilty. Seven students were found not guilty because they did not benefit from the incident (e.g., leaving a computer unlocked).

The College feels that the graphs created by the AI Committee are a key element of evidence and the AI Committee should continue sharing them. In particular, the graphs provide an opportunity to demonstrate the evidence to the student during their meeting with the Assistant or Associate Dean Academic; more and more students then freely acknowledge that they have subscriptions to websites like chegg.com. G. Grewal took the Council through the steps of submitting an assignment to chegg.com and how easy it is to get exactly the answer required.

G. Grewal also demonstrated how an assignment is brought into Sneakoscope and cross-checked. During the process, there are many individuals who are responsible for one part or another. This includes the instructor, AIO, Associate Director, Director and analyst to prepare and bring a case to the Dean's Office. Once the Dean's Office has the case, an administrator, Associate Dean, and program counsellor meet with the student. Beyond the case and spreadsheets prepared for the meeting, hand written notes are taken at the meeting; there is additional time spent ensuring the letter notifying the student of the result of the investigation is correct and complete in case of an appeal. To date, no one has appealed.

D. Chiu expressed concern that we are an education department, not a police department. He added that it is a widespread problem and there is a question of whether they think they won't get caught. He continued that he didn't feel the penalty was a deterrent and suggested we focus on repeat offenders.

G. Grewal disagreed that the penalty wasn't enough of a deterrent. Of the students who were found guilty, only one was a repeat offender. He elaborated that the process itself is quite stressful for the students and most of the time they are quite visibly upset during the meeting.

P. Matsakis responded that even if we focused on the repeat offenders, we would still need to go through the whole process. He asked the room to consider whether all this is worth the time spent by many faculty and staff in SoCS and CEPS. Perhaps less weight should be given to the assignments (the weight doesn't have to reflect the time students spend working on the assignments) and more weight should be given to the midterm and final exams (as it is much easier to limit academic misconduct during exams).

The discussion ended due to time constraints.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30PM