School of Computer Science
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 17, 2018
1:00 – 2:30PM, MCKN 318

Present – *Faculty*: L. Antonie, D. Calvert, D. Chiu, R. Dara, D. Flatla, D. Gillis, G. Grewal, A. Hamilton-Wright, S. Kremer, P. Matsakis (Interim Director), C. Obimbo, J. Sawada, S. Scott, F. Song, F. Wang; *Staff:* D. Byart, C. Hosker, J. Hughes, K. Johnston, G. Klotz, S. Mousseau (Recording Secretary), D. Rea, L. Zweep; *Student Representatives:* J. Fraser, F. Hasson

Regrets – *Faculty*: R. Chaturvedi, X. Li, J. McCuaig, D. Nikitenko, B. Nonnecke, D. Stacey, M. Wineberg, M. Wirth, Y. Xiang

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the agenda be approved (A. Hamilton-Wright/D. Calvert)
In Favour: All. **MOTION PASSED**

2. Approval of Minutes from Mar 20, 2018

Motion: That the minutes for March 20 be approved (C. Obimbo/A. Hamilton-Wright)
In Favour: All but one. Abstentions: One. **MOTION PASSED**

3. Interim Director's Remarks – Pascal

P. Matsakis thanked Janice Ilic for her work as Graduate Program Assistant and welcomed Jennifer Hughes back from maternity leave. Filip Hasson was introduced as the new SOCIS president.

NSERC DG

Five applications were submitted to NSERC. Unfortunately, only one was successful. Congratulations to J. Sawada for having his application approved. P. Matsakis encouraged J. Sawada to join the SoCS Writing Circle this summer and help others develop and improve their NSERC DG application for the fall deadline.

Director Search

The Director's search continues. There were 18 external candidates. Four were selected for preliminary interviews through Skype (on April 16th and April 18th). The four candidates

should then be narrowed down to two, who will be invited for a campus visit and another interview on May 10 and 11. D. Chiu asked if there will be presentations from these candidates, and P. Matsakis said yes.

T&P Guidelines

The Provost recently approved the T&P Guidelines from Chemistry, Physics, and Math & Stats. These were submitted to the College T&P Committee two years ago. It is therefore very unlikely that the SoCS guidelines will be approved anytime soon.

Meeting with the Provost

The meeting with the Provost was rescheduled again, and should happen the week of April 23rd. The agenda for the meeting includes faculty positions. One of the arguments for additional faculty is the student to faculty ratio.

Student to Faculty Ratios

There are a few ways to calculate the student to faculty ratio. One way is the FTE (full-time equivalent) number of undergraduate students plus FTE graduates divided by the FTE number of faculty. SoCS' current ratio is then 36.2. C. Hosker worked with P. Matsakis to reach out to the other 14 top comprehensive universities in Canada and received answers from about half. For example, the Department of Computer Science at Brock University has a ratio of 51.2, and they have many faculty members retiring soon; the ratio at the University of New Brunswick Saint John is 11.5, but this is a very small unit; the ratio at Waterloo is 32. Some universities wouldn't provide numbers or didn't have time over the past three weeks.

Another way to calculate the student to faculty ratio is the FTE number of undergraduate students divided by the FTE number of faculty. SoCS' current ratio is then 33.9. In comparison, the School of Engineering's ratio is 29.3, the College as a whole has a ratio of 24.1, and CS at Waterloo has a ratio of 28.5. We would need 5.5 additional faculty members for our ratio next year to be 29.3 (SoE's current ratio). All of these numbers tell a story that we can bring to the Provost.

C. Obimbo asked if we are pitching it mainly based on the student to faculty ratio.
P. Matsakis responded that it is one of the arguments.

S. Kremer asked about a report organized by CS-Can/Info-Can that pulls together information from all CS units across Canada. P. Matsakis responded that to his knowledge there is no report for this year. S. Kremer suggested that the report from last year or two years ago be used as reference. He added that there are numbers across all kinds of things that might really work well for the School. P. Matsakis agreed, but added that each unit has its own story, and comparing numbers is often difficult.

D. Flatla asked if SoCS has the worst ratio in the College. P. Matsakis responded that he believes the Dean said this is true. D. Gillis asked if the expected ratio of 36.4 for 2018-19 is based on the same number of undergraduate admissions as last year. P. Matsakis replied yes; 200 is the enrollment target for this fall.

C. Obimbo asked if the faculty that are retiring are being replaced. P. Matsakis responded that they are (B. Nonnecke with R. Dara and X. Li with A. Dehghantanha). He went on to say that there are some expected retirements over the next few years and the School will need to be proactive to replace them.

MSc in Cybersecurity

There are concerns about whether A. Dehghantanha, who is supposed to be the program leader for the new MSc in cybersecurity, will still join us: he was a lecturer at the University of Salford when we interviewed him for the position; we would have liked him to start on Sep 1, 2017, but he requested Mar 1, 2018 instead; then he and his partners received a big grant, and the start date was pushed again, to Aug 1, 2018; it now appears that A. Dehghantanha has a permanent position (senior lecturer) at the University of Sheffield.

Nevertheless, A. Dehghantanha reassures us that there is no change to his plans and we will see him on August 1st. At any rate, since he signed the offer letter, there is nothing we can do but believe him and wait. P. Matsakis went on to say that A. Dehghantanha has been very active in the Cyber Security Program Discussion Group: he is participating in discussions, responsive with emails, etc. P. Matsakis added that H. Khan is also now involved in the Group.

C. Obimbo asked if A. Dehghantanha has a visa problem. P. Matsakis responded that no, he is a permanent resident.

J. Sawada added that A. Dehghantanha has been asking about our PhD program and already thinks he has a student signed up for the program, so he is showing signs of interest.

2017-18 Budget

The base budget for the School includes everything, from TAs, equipment and furniture, to faculty salaries, etc. It was $5M in 2015-16; it was bumped to $5.5M in 2016-17; it was the same in 2017-18; and it will be the same in 2018-19 (except for a one-time 1.5% cut). We started the 2017-18 fiscal year with a negative balance of −$500K (carried over from many years ago), we are ending it with a negative balance of −$250K (because of money given to SoCS for A. Dehghantanha and D. Flatla's positions), and we are now asked to bring the balance down to zero.

One item of note is the money earned through DE courses every year. We are expected to make $220K: if we make less, it's as if our budget was lower; if we make more, it's as if our

budget was greater. In 2017-18, we lost about $19K (essentially because less students are taking CIS*1200 in the winter semester).

We have a budget of $710K for all of the additional staff, including Sessional Lecturers, TAs, and the Office Clerk position; we have gone over budget by $74K (essentially because we have offered many TA positions). We have a budget of $20K to pay for travel and accommodation; we went over budget by $49K (essentially because of the many interviews with faculty candidates). All hardware, software, supplies, phones, etc., come out of a budget of $198K; we have gone over by $5K.

2018-19 Budget

Considering the numbers above, and the request that we bring the balance down to zero, we need to make more money, and we need to save more. We have begun to take steps, like merging CIS*1000 and CIS*1200, and introducing a new DE course (which should be available for F19), but some difficult decisions lie ahead.

TAs are a big expense — the biggest expense after faculty salaries. We need to reduce the number of GTAs and increase the number of UTAs (which cost much less). We need to ask ourselves if we want to keep the GSA / Academic Integrity Officer position. We may also have to cut the Office Clerk position. The 2018-19 budget for Recruitment and Outreach will be $11K, which is about half what it was in 2017-18; as a result, Go Code Girl may be cancelled, and the Fall BBQ may be cancelled. SOCIS is receiving some bad news as well: last year, we gave over $10K so that students could go to different events; this year, there will be no money.

S. Kremer mentioned that based on the Provost budget discussion, the college teams have been squirreling away a surplus of money, and that surplus is being taxed by the Provost. He elaborated that there is money in the Provost's office and the Dean's office. Money going back to the Provost should be coming to us instead. The money is there and the School needs to make enough of a ruckus to get it.

P. Matsakis said that while he agrees, the relationship with the Provost is broken in many places, not just with UGFA; and when we speak with the College, we are told they do not have money either. In the end, there may be money, but not at SoCS.

D. Rea asked if this is a kind of accounting breach that can be brought to the SMA. He suggested that we approach the province and show that they are cooking the books.

P. Matsakis mentioned that the budget model is currently an incremental model, but this is going to change, and we are in a transition period. D. Gillis asked if the budget will change with faculty retirement. C. Hosker responded that generally the Dean's office will claw back money not being paid out in salary and so it will affect our base budget. D. Gillis asked if it would also affect our debt. P. Matsakis responded that no, it will not.

L. Zweep brought up that SOCIS was looking to host the CS Games next year. P. Matsakis replied that he thinks it is a great idea, but the College says they won't be able to participate. M. Torcoletti has told us there is no money, nor support to provide to SOCIS. D. Gillis asked what would happen if F. Hasson goes back to SOCIS and speaks to the students who then begin to complain about the situation. P. Matsakis responded that they should complain, and that the more people complain, the more weight behind the issue.

D. Gillis asked if the undergraduate admissions go up from 200 accidentally to 250 or more, would we get money back? P. Matsakis responded that this would be part of the conversation next week. But communication with the Provost is very difficult. She has no time and more important things to do then meet with SoCS. Hopefully there will be a meeting next week and we will see what the Provost has in mind.

D. Chiu put forward while the current sentiment is to complain about the Provost, maybe we should be complaining to the Dean, as she needs to move money from other units to us. Looking at the student to faculty ratios, it is clear they are not evenly distributed. He went on to say that his guess is that the Dean may have some leeway and rather than targeting the Provost who is a difficult person to reach, the Dean might be an easier way to get the funding needed. P. Matsakis replied that while he understands, M. Wells is still very new to the position; she is supportive of us and she is trying to figure out who the Provost is and how to negotiate.

D. Flatla brought up his concern that senior administrators are saving money away for their own projects rather than distributing amongst the units. He asked if UGFA is our only ally. P. Matsakis responded that UGFA is aware of the issues but they have a very hard time with the Provost, and he isn't sure what else can be done.

CIS*1200 DE

We did not lose money with CIS*1200 in W18 (we made $700); as a result, and as agreed with Open Learning, we will offer CIS*1200 again in W19. Likewise, CIS*1000 will be offered in S18; if we do not lose money, we will offer it again in S19.

Reynolds

According to Physical Resources, we are currently $270K over budget for the renovations. This means that we have $270K less for furniture. The issue is being discussed with the Dean and PR.

Thornbrough

The renovations for THRN 2418 are expected to start in May and end in June.

Guaranteed GTAs

As mentioned earlier, we need to decrease the number of GTAs and increase the number of UTAs. Starting May 1st, guaranteed GTA funding will no longer be automatic, and all prospective graduate students will need to apply for GTA funding in parallel to the graduate application. While most domestic PhD students should expect 2 GTAs/year for 3 years, the other students should not expect more than 1 GTA/year for 2 (MSc) or 3 (PhD) years.

R. Dara asked if this was against the University guidelines, which promote bringing in international students. S. Kremer followed up that he believes this is a dreadful idea as SoCS is not competitive enough in bringing in international PhD students. He argued that this will negatively impact the faculty members' research.

P. Matsakis responded that these were all very good points but went on to explain that GTAs are one of our biggest expenses, cuts must be made, and no other unit in the College offers two guaranteed GTA positions per year like we currently do. This being said, we have maybe four international PhD students a year, so domestic and international could be matched in an offer of two GTA positions per year — for now. But this cannot be done for MSc students. We currently have 50 graduate students and we're putting students with guaranteed GTA positions into courses where we don't even need them (like first year courses, where we should be using UTAs instead).

S. Scott asked if we were going to discuss raising money. P. Matsakis said that this was not happening today, but, yes, we will need to talk about it. S. Stacey suggested we consider course-based masters, as that is how every other University is raising money. P. Matsakis responded that it is likely for the incoming Director to manage.

4. Academic Staff Hiring Committee – Andrew

TA Allocation Process

A. Hamilton-Wright has been chairing the Academic Staff Hiring Committee since Sep 2017. This is not the committee who decides how many TAs but which TAs are assigned. The TA hiring process includes the placing of any guaranteed GTA positions awarded to incoming graduate students. Due to CUPE agreements and labour laws, the only information that can be used by the Committee is the student's application for the TA position. However, all of our students have difficulty writing good applications; most seem to be writing a teaching statement rather than applying for a job; many graduate students with guaranteed GTA positions do not feel they need to provide a complete application. As a result, there is poor information to allocate the TAs and some instructors have expressed dissatisfaction with their TAs, especially their GTAs.

What is Being Done?

In order to get better information from applicants, job descriptions are being updated to include a standard group of questions about the student's teaching experience and knowledge of the course material. A sample application has been created for TA applicants to review during the application process in order to help them provide all of the necessary information. In addition, during graduate admission time, prospective students will now be asked for information through a Qualtrics survey to help determine whether they can support a GTA, and for which courses.

S. Kremer asked if this was compatible with the application website run by the University. A. Hamilton-Wright responded that this is completely separate. S. Kremer noted that we would not be able to use this information in the TA hiring process itself as it is counter to the CUPE rules and regulations. He asked if we would offer the prospective student one or two guaranteed GTA positions per year based on the answers to the Qualtrics survey. A. Hamilton-Wright confirmed that this is correct.

C. Obimbo asked if this process is happening when the student is applying or when they have been accepted. P. Matsakis clarified that it is when the student's application is being reviewed by the Graduate Admissions Committee, i.e., the student has applied and a faculty member is willing to supervise them.

J. Sawada asked what the point to this process was unless we can use the information for the TA hiring process. A. Hamilton-Wright responded that this will help determine the number of guaranteed GTA positions for the applicant, and it will also help for planning.

S. Kremer asked if this would give mainstream computing students an advantage over students who have no computing experience. G. Grewal suggested that the graduate student's supervisor could then arrange to get them a GTA in their home discipline.

What Does the Committee Need from You?

A. Hamilton-Wright followed up the discussion by adding that faculty help is needed to ensure the right students are placed in the right TA positions. Please discuss this information with the students under your supervision so that they understand which positions to apply to and how to apply. In addition, each instructor should go over the course requirements with their TAs and provide some training at the beginning of the term. They should also review, provide feedback and evaluate their TAs before the end of the term.

Due to time constraints, the remaining items were tabled to the next Council meeting. Meeting adjourned at 2:26PM