**Department Council Meeting**  
**Monday, September 16, 2013**

Samir Khuller, Department Chair, convened the meeting at 12:05pm.

The first topic of discussion was the Department Review which will be held this academic year 2013 – 2014. The first part of the review is self-assessment which is being chaired by Howard Elman with a small committee consisting of Dave Mount, Jan Plane, Alan Sussman, and Jeff Foster. The committee will be sending surveys to various groups of department personnel to gather information for the self-assessment report. The review generally occurs every 10 years but it should occur every 5 years. When the review occurs is determined by the college dean. Because the reviews are time consuming and the college can only handle 2-3 per year, the reality is that the reviews do not tend to occur within the 5 year time frame.

Faculty members had submitted suggested names for the external review which will occur sometime during spring 2014. Fifteen names were submitted to the dean who will make the final decision of who is selected to be on the external review committee. In part, this depends on a reviewer’s time commitments, availability and when the committee can meet. The dean will notify the department chair of the committee composition and time of review once finalized. We hope this will happen in April 2014.

The first set of reviewers invited are: Barbara Grosz (Harvard), Margaret Wright (NYU), Ellen Zegura (GA Tech), Shafi Goldwasser (MIT). The dean will invite additional people as negative responses are received from the initial group of invitees. He will be trying to balance research areas etc.

The second topic was the Department Retreat to be tentatively held next fall 2014. There were three retreats while Larry Davis was Chair. He felt two went well and the third was not useful as it was not well structured. Larry’s approach was to form a committee, determine the topics to be discussed and assigned faculty members to present those topics.

Jeff Hollingsworth suggested that the reverse approach could also be used, i.e. at the retreat determine the areas of discussion, form committees, assign topics to specific faculty members who would present the information at a later forum/timeframe.

The question was asked as to what the objective of the retreat would be? Why is a retreat needed? Why couldn’t a retreat be held on campus to reduce the time and cost of such an activity?

Samir mentioned that he hoped to have the results of the department review by that time. It was mentioned that given past department reviews, the final report which must go through campus administration (up to the Provost with several responses from the Chair, Dean and Provost not being unusual) might not be finalized by early fall 2014. Samir hopes that at least a draft documents would exist by early fall 2014.
Two possible locations were mentioned for a day long retreat:

1. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center – just across the Bay Bridge (60 – 90 minutes to reach the location for most faculty members)
2. Bolger Center, Potomac MD – (mentioned since the location is much closer and travel time would not take away from meeting time assuming a one day meeting)

Samir said he would raise the subject of holding a retreat in fall 2014 and the location with the full Professorial Faculty to get further input.

The department has a number of space constraints. Samir summarized the conversion of the area where the library had been located with the space to be used for collaborative discussions/meetings with faculty members. The library materials have been moved to a small room and although tight, the material can be accessed. New carpet and painting should be completed by the end of September. Furniture must be ordered which will take time since State Use must be the vendor. Items maintained in inventory by State Use generally take 4-6 weeks but other items can take months to receive. Samir encouraged the graduate student representatives to get involved quickly if they had ideas of the type of furniture to be purchased and how the area should be configured. Lots of white boards were mentioned as one requirement.

Samir asked the UG student representatives about space for UG students and what further suggestions he had for the current lounge. He also mentioned the need for more white boards. Currently the lounge is open between 8am and 5pm. He asked that the area be open until at least 9pm as many students used the hours after classes to meet. Some students used the bus to commute so the lounge’s hours should take that into consideration. The Physics UG lounge was used as an example. It was key carded so that students could use the space at their convenience. The key card swipe broke this past summer so the door is now open at all times. To his knowledge, there had not been any problem with vandalism, students leaving a mess and not cleaning up after themselves or people sleeping in the lounge. It was noted that the number of Physics UG students was far less than the number within CS (approx. 1400).

Samir mentioned he was very concerned about the limited TA space for assisting UG students given the increase in student numbers. He has already told upper level TAs that they can used the Graduate Lounge on the first floor as over-flow space from the TA room. The graduate student representatives mentioned that graduate students only use the first floor lounge for lunch since most are located on the 3rd and 4th floors of this building and don’t want to go down to the first floor.

A suggestion was made that perhaps two offices on the first floor could be combined to provide additional space for the UG student lounge and move staff to another area in the building. It was also mentioned that someone should look at how the UG room on the first floor was set-up for electronic interaction space and some of that technology might be used in a new configuration for the UG lounge.
There was also mention of science fiction books (may belong to Pete Stewart) in a room that could be moved to the same location as where the library materials have been stored.

MCWIC – Samir has requested the space from the dean which had been occupied by the college development office (3rd floor AVW). There will be a formal announcement of the Women’s Center on October 17 in conjunction with the Marie Klawe visit with the center opening early January 2014. Eric Chapman has been trying to raise funds in support of the Center for student scholarships. Samir read a list of companies who had pledged funding with one who has provided funds to help support attendees at the Grace Hopper Conference (Epic, Yahoo!). A question was raised as to whether the term “Center” can be used? Sometime ago centers had to be approved by campus administration. It’s not clear if that rule still exists today. Samir will check with the Dean who may not be aware of the rule.

The Department’s 40th Anniversary will be held on October 18 with afternoon and evening activities. A list of 7200 alums were sent letters of invitation last week and email was sent to mailing list Friday evening. Faculty members are being encouraged to invite their former students.

Eric Chapman has been asking company representatives to be on an External CS and UMIACS Board. Samir wanted the council members to express their ideas on who to ask to be on the board. Samir mentioned that Rance felt that an external board was valuable as well as some of the chairs Samir had met during a conference. Samir read a list of the members who have agreed to be on the board. Additional seats will be filled.

A question was raised as to the goals of the board and the role a board will play? The members of a board need to be given specific directions and told what is expected from them. Samir was encouraged to contact CS departments who had boards to determine specific objectives (example: fund raising, input to the college dean or other campus officials). Kay Spearman was used as an example of a board member when Vic Basili was chair who helped push the formation of UMIACS.

Samir feels it is important to foster joint activities between students and faculty members. Questions were raised about the graduate student sponsored picnic (what was the turnout, how many faculty members participated, was it considered a success etc?) It was noted that the coffee hour was not heavily attended by faculty members although students liked it due to free food. It’s packed at 3:15pm but few students remain towards the end of coffee hour. Samir feels that specific notes should be sent to individual faculty members to get them interested in attending any student event.

The Future Faculty Fellows Program was announced by Jeff Foster. Samir said this is in conjunction with the Engineering College. It is a two year program developed for mid-career Ph.D. students to train them in what is involved in accepting a position in academia. Engineering students who have participated seem to like the program and learned from it. There is a competitive selection process with more detailed program information as follows:
Applications open October 15
Student Applications due November 1
Faculty Recommendation letters due November 15 (2 letters, 1 from advisor 1 from another person)
Decisions will be made before winter break
Selected students must enroll in the initial training seminar in Spring 2014.
Four students will be selected from CS for this program.

Web site address is:  http://www.eng.umd.edu/academics/future-faculty

There was a question raised as to how often a council meeting must be held. It was thought to be either every semester or once per year. Upon checking the Plan of Organization, there is no mention as to the required frequency of holding council meetings. Its function is advisory to the department chair.

With no members expressing additional comments, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55pm.