

A Department Council Meeting was held on 11/17/00 beginning at 3:05pm. Nine of the eleven members were present. Larry Davis convened the meeting and turned it over to Carl Smith who presented the first agenda topic: "recommended changes to the Department's recently approved Plan of Organization".

The first proposed change had to do with rewording Amendment I Section 3 of the Bylaws which covers two term limit restrictions on Department elected positions. Dr. Smith felt that the current language could be misinterpreted and that it should be reworded so that it is clear that there is a two consecutive term limit for all elected positions in the Department - Council, APT Chair, Salary Committee and Senate member. After some discussion, a motion was made and seconded to vote on the need for such a change with the specific wording to be determined at a later time. The Council's vote was as follows: 5 in favor of the change, 3 against the change, and 1 abstention.

The second proposed change had to do with various options of how elections are administered. Dr. Smith indicated that he felt the current method was the least fair of all possible methods and proposed several options. This was discussed at length with council members proposing yet additional possible methods. The one consistent point made throughout this discussion was that no one wanted a voting method which required a prolonged voting process. Therefore, after consideration of all the options, a motion was made and seconded for the council to vote on changing the current process to an "Approval voting method". The Council's vote was as follows: 6 in favor of the change, 3 against the change.

Both of these changes must now be voted on by each of the department constituent assemblies: undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty. At least 3 of the assemblies must vote in favor of the changes if they are to become effective.

The second agenda topic, "Ph.D. course based system" was presented by Samir Khuller. Samir, on behalf of other faculty members, expressed concern regarding the department's current course based system. Some faculty members believe that graduate students are taking 400 level courses to gain an "easy A" since there are no restrictions on the courses which graduate students may take. One suggestion was to stipulate that graduate students must take graduate level courses and reduce the number from 10 to 6. There is also concern that the majority of graduate students are not introduced to research until after the completion of their MS requirements. Some CS departments in other universities have independent study projects required of first year graduate students which acquaints them with research methods and hopefully, encourages them to think beyond acquiring the MS degree. There was also discussion of the department's prior "course plus comprehensive exam system". The problem with the system was that the majority of faculty members did not want to spend the time writing the exam nor grading the exam.

There was agreement among the council members that the issues were of concern to the graduate program but that further information needed to be collected before further discussion could be of benefit to the department. Two suggestions were made: gather information on various

aspects of the graduate program that is compiled in the graduate office data base; develop a survey that is handed-out by the teaching faculty to graduate students just prior to the December holiday break which asks their views on suggested changes to the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm.