Education Meeting Agenda
Friday, January 30, 2009

1. Vote on a proposal to change the department's required time to reach candidacy in the Ph.D. program from five years to four years. The proposed text in the graduate manual on the department’s web page (and the text it would replace) is listed below. **Presented by Howard Elman**

New text:

8.2. Time Limitations

**Advancement to Candidacy.** You must advance to candidacy no later than four years after entering the graduate program.

**Completing the Dissertation.** It is expected that you complete your dissertation and final oral examination, and obtain the PhD degree, within two years after advancing to candidacy. You must meet these requirements within four years after advancing to candidacy.

Old text: see the web site listed below for the complete document:


8.2. Time Limitations

The Graduate School imposes two time limitations. First, you must advance to candidacy no later than five years after entering the graduate program, and normally one academic year before you receive your PhD degree. Second, after you are admitted to candidacy, you must complete your PhD degree, including the dissertation and final oral examination, within four additional years.

If you cannot meet a time limitation, you must file a petition for extension of time. Extensions cannot exceed one year. For each time limitation, the Graduate School normally accepts no more than two petitions for extension; a student requiring more is usually terminated.
2. Add a discussion section to 351. Presented by Jeff Hollingsworth

At the request of students, Evan Golub has started to explore having Friday "sessions" that are similar to recitation sections in classes such as 250 or 330. After two semesters of ad-hoc explorations of this, we propose adding a single 1 hour 15 minute recitation each week to CMSC351. This would make it similar to the 3-credit CMSC330 which has two lectures that are each 1 hour and 15 minutes, and two recitation sections of 50 minutes.

The following are the ways in which this recitation section could be used based on the observations from the above trials:

- provide new practice problems aside from the homework assignments that students could try working out, and then see being worked out by the TA while answering questions along the way.

- have questions from already turned-in homework discussed before the homework is handed back so that students who had difficulty with the homework questions or were unsure about their solutions can get more immediate feedback and see the full problem worked through.

- depending on the faculty member, the recitation might be used in two different ways around exam time:
  * one could use recitation to have problem review time before each exam (these could be homework problems, previous recitation problems, extra problems that were posted for the class throughout the time leading up to the exam, problems that were worked through in class)
  * this could also be a good time to give exams

The optional Friday sessions currently held had varying attendance levels (attendance was not taken to avoid any concern of whether it was noted who attended) but from what TAs have indicated, around a quarter of the students were taking advantage of the sessions, and were very happy with having TAs available in addition to their office hours.

3. Should time permit there will be a discussion of "best practices" in teaching. This is the result of things that faculty members are doing in class that result in low teaching evaluations. Presented by Jeff Hollingsworth