An Education Meeting was held on October 18, 2002 beginning at 2pm in the CSIC building. Larry Davis opened the meeting by mentioning that Larry Herman had a few brief comments that he wanted to make ref. his liaison work with OIT.

Larry Herman said that the various upgrades that had been discussed would be installed throughout the Fall semester. Since OIT is interested in changing to Solaris or IBM computers, they would like to hear from CS faculty members if changing the operating system that has been used will cause a problem. Please send Larry Herman any comments that you may have on this topic.

Larry Davis then asked if anyone would mind if the meeting was taped. The request had been made by Jan Plane who was very interested in the discussion and could not attend the first part of the meeting. No one objected to the taping of the meeting.

Larry Davis stated that the purpose of this meeting was to present the Committee's Report on Lower Division Courses and Bill Pugh's suggested changes to that proposal that had been endorsed by the software engineering and systems field committees. There would be no voting on either proposal at today's meeting. Larry then turned the meeting over to Pete Stewart requesting that Pete summarize his committee's report and the process that they employed in developing it.

Pete began by saying that the committee was an outgrowth of the Faculty Retreat. The members had been meeting each Friday to gather information and discuss its implications. Jim Purtilo had gathered information from various other CS programs but the committee found that there was no uniformity as to what or how information is being taught at other Universities. The Department's Undergraduate Honors Students were also asked for their input on the lower Division Courses and they provided more feedback then Department faculty members.

The committee's proposal reflects a summary of many different ideas, represented a compromise on the part of the membership, and reflected a conservative approach to revising the subject matter. The attached syllabus was to generate discussion among the membership. In its current form it can not be used to gather approval by the PCC university process. Whatever course of action is agreed upon, it is strongly suggested that the teaching of Java begin by Spring 2004. Therefore, changes must be submitted to the University by this Fall. Please refer to the full committee report dated October 11, 2002 for the specifics of this proposal.

It was pointed out that CMSC 311 and 330 needed the further attention of their field committees and that this was not the task of this committee. There was a lot of discussion regarding information that had been collected and listed under the heading, "Miscellaneous Observations and Recommendation". This discussion was curtailed as it was not the central point of this meeting.

Bill Pugh then presented his proposal on Lower Division Courses. Please refer to it for specific content. Bill's proposal offered further clarification of some specific points and more specificity on others.
The primary difference in his proposal is that it emphasizes that C++ should not be covered in any of the CS 1 through 3 sequence courses, that the courses should contain more material on software engineering skills, and that projects should make use of API's and GUI's.

The floor was opened to discussion and questions. Some members stated that bright students who have come to our program without programming experience on the high school level should not be excluded by how our course sequence is developemnt. It was also acknowledged that too many students have not developed strong programming skills by the time they are taking 400 level courses. Therefore, the lower level sequence should have built into its course content practical projects that will help develop these software engineering skills. Some faculty members also mentioned that students should learn how to write code for a web server in their first sequence course. Other faculty mentioned the need to further discuss the need/importance of C++ and where it should fit into the curriculum. For those students leaving school following their B.S. degree, knowledge of C++ can be a very important component to their work situation. The majority of members seemed to feel that C++ did not need to be offered within a core course but others felt that it should be offered somewhere within the upper level courses. It is used for graphics, as an example. There was a straw vote taken on whether to remove C++ from the sequence. The vote was 22 in favor, 5 against, and 5 abstentions.

It was further stated that consideration of both proposals need broad faculty representation and that the final proposal should be very specific and incorporate all of the course content.

Larry Davis suggested the following criteria for the next draft proposal:

1. The proposal must be explicit regarding what is included in each sequence of courses with the syllabus developed so that it can be passed on for PCC review.

2. It is important that projects be incorporated into the lower level course sequence that employ API's and teach students how to develop GUI's and web programming skills.

3. Larry would like some of the new Assistant Professors involved in the development of the next proposal. They have more practical and up to date training and information on this subject matter than some of the more senior level Professors.

4. Larry will appoint a new committee which is broad in its representation.

5. Larry will consider some administrative relief, if necessary, for those on the committee but the Department is not in a position to pay summer salary for those engaged in this activity. The University's financial constraints will not permit this option.

6. There will be a simultaneous review of CSMC 311 and 330.

Larry Davis adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm.