

Education Meeting Friday, September 24, 2010

The Education Meeting was opened by Prof. Jeff Hollingsworth at 2:05pm.

The first agenda topic listed a discussion of course prerequisites for CMSC 102 which Jeff mentioned was an attempt to clean-up the course description (see attached document). The document shows the phrases that are to be eliminated. Jeff mentioned that all CS courses are listed in the campus on-line catalogue. A few questions were asked and then a motion was made and seconded to accept the proposal. The vote was unanimous to accept the proposed course changes as recommended.

The next course proposal was to delete CMSC 114, 212, and 214 from the UG course catalogue (see attached document) as CMSC 114 and 214 have not been taught in a number of years. A motion was made and seconded to accept the proposal. The vote was unanimous in favor of deleting 114, 212, and 214 from the CS roster of courses.

The third course proposal was for a technical correction to prerequisites for CMSC 216 with a change to corequisite CMSC 250 (see attached document). As there was no opposition to the proposal, a motion was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor of the proposal.

Course proposal CMSC 425 - Game Programming was discussed briefly by Prof. Dave Mount who said the course has been popular with students. The intent would be for a graphics course to be offered in the fall with this course offered in the spring. The course includes a group project with 4-5 students in each group. The proposal is to officially create and offer this as a regular CS course. A motion was made, seconded and the vote was unanimous.

CMSC 436 - Hand Held Systems has been taught by Adam Porter and Evan Golub in past semesters. Ashok Agrawala has also offered a similar graduate level course. Student interest has been strong and it is helpful to have several faculty members who are willing to teach the course which provides flexibility in scheduling and course coverage. The intended audience is for students who have completed courses up through CMSC 330. Most of these students will be CS majors. There were questions regarding the numbering schema (43X vs. 42X) and about multi-threading. The intent isn't to replace information taught in other course offerings. Intentionally, the course is not loaded with prerequisites. A motion was made to add this course to the official list of CS courses. A motion was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous.

PCC paperwork was available (see attached documents) and discussed for CMSC 423, 425 and 436. Each course was considered separately.

CMSC 423 was created several years ago and has been offered with typical enrollments of 35-40 students. The Computational Biology group has increased in size and the proposal is to use this course as a standard UG senior elective. Each semester students

who are interested in taking the course have requested exceptions for the course to count as an elective. A motion was made and seconded and the vote was in favor of the proposal.

CMSC 425 has been offered multiple times as a special topics class and a proposal was made to permit this course to count towards graduation. For a variety of reasons, there were concerns voiced and questions raised regarding whether the numbering series was appropriate and whether the course should be added and count towards graduation credits. A motion was made and seconded and a vote taken but the proposal did not pass.

The last course proposal, CMSC 436 was discussed and the request that the course be considered as an elective which would count towards graduation was voted on with 17 in favor of the proposal and 6 opposed.

One topic not on the agenda was CMSC 106 which is a course for non-CS majors using the C programming language. The proposal was to change a co-requisite of pre-calculus to a prerequisite for calculus. It has been noted that students who do not have strong math skills will not do well in the course. There was some discussion but no vote was taken as the subject was not previously listed. Voting on this topic will take place at a later time.

A fundamental question regarding ‘what should be included in the UG CS curriculum’ needs to be discussed and resolved in the future. The question is, before graduating, what course content should all CS students have mastered?

The second half of the meeting began at 3pm and was run by Prof. Howard Elman. His first topic was to mention that the course, “How to do Research” has been taught by various faculty members and is a required one credit course for graduate students. He will be teaching the course this spring and making revisions to it. If anyone is interested in the course content, please contact Howard directly. He will be developing a course web page and can share it with interested parties.

Steven Salzberg presented a proposal to make Computational Biology as a core area (separate field committee) so that students can select courses from 5 out of 8 areas. It was noted that the area now includes four professors and that this would permit a more logical labeling of courses by having a separate area. A suggestion was made that a more appropriate title for the field committee would be “Bioinformatics” to distinguish itself from other related fields. The suggestion was accepted.

It was mentioned that the department’s web page lists 8 areas now and this needs to be corrected. There was concern expressed that some field committees have been shouldering a heavier UG teaching load than others and this additional field committee could create further problems. Steven Salzberg said that it was never his intention to only teach courses within the Bioinformatics area, that there is flexibility and that the issue of field committees and course teaching distribution will not be exacerbated or resolved

with the addition of Bioinformatics. This is a discussion that should take place at a later time.

It was noted that this change must be processed through the campus PCC committee and that graduate course distribution must be resolved for the required paperwork. Howard Elman will work with the Bioinformatics group to coordinate the information needed for PCC processing. A corrected internal designation of field committees can be made on the department's web page which may assist students with their area choices.

A motion was made to add Bioinformatics to the graduate core area so that students can select their course distributions from five out of eight areas. A vote was taken and the majority of members present were in favor of the proposed motion.

Handouts describing CMSC 701 and 702 were distributed. These courses have been taught several times during past semesters and the committee members are comfortable with the course content. A suggestion was made to change course titles with 701 becoming Computational Genomics and 702 becoming Computational Systems Biology. A further suggestion was made to add the prerequisite of CMSC 423 or that a student must be at the graduate level before being able to register for the courses. Changes will be made to the documents and submitted. Because there was no longer a quorum of members present, mention of an email vote on these two courses was suggested. The courses will become part of the PCC information which must be submitted. A request to hold an email vote among the members will be made. If there are objections to the email vote, it will be held until the next scheduled meeting, currently set for October 8.

Howard adjourned the meeting at 3:40pm.