Item: CMSC 724 prerequisites

Problem: CMSC 724 sees a high enrollment of non-CS graduate students, especially from INFM — however, almost all of them drop the course by the first week of classes, once they understand the course material and the background it requires. (In Spring 2014, 15 non-CMSC students were enrolled in the beginning, all but 1 of whom dropped the course). However because of this, last few times, the course has been full from the beginning and has had a high waiting list, potentially discouraging CS graduate students from taking it.

Proposal: Add “and (CS PhD or CS MS standing or permission of department or instructor)” to the course prerequisites to ensure that the non-CS graduate students talk to the instructor before enrolling, and can be told what to expect from the course.

Following is an analysis of datashowing how full CMSC 724 was over time during enrollment for the last couple of offerings. (Note there was no waitlist information, so this is just based on number of people actually enrolled over time.)

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Nick’s Spring 2014, observations by date:

— November 6, 2013: The course limit of 30 reached (after 1 week) — 12 INFM, 3 ENEE, 15 CMSC
   ALL but one of the 15 non-CMSC students dropped the course eventually.
— No modifications (i.e., course full) until:
   December 3-5, 2013: 3 Drops, 3 Adds. Now we have 10 INFM, 3 ENEE, 17 CMSC

— No modifications after that until January 9, 2014. In the week after that, there was quite a bit of activity, and the waiting list was exhausted (I assume) on January 17. There was a drop on January 20, but no corresponding Add-from-waiting-list.

— Enrollment on January 17: 30

— Enrollment at Start of Classes: 25

So there was a period of about 2 months between November 6 through January 9, when the class was full and had > 40% non-CMSC students, all but one of whom dropped the course.

To be fair: It is unclear if this affected CMSC students — by my calculations, the class had open spaces from January 20, about a week before Start of Classes. However the waiting list sizes were quite large till close to that date, which may have prevented some students from trying to sign up.

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Amol's Spring 2013:
— November 9, 2012: The class was full — 2 INFM, 2 ENEE, 1 HCIM
ALL 5 of them eventually dropped the course

— Sporadic activity (4 Drops and 4 Adds) through December 12, 2012.

— Class full and no activity till January 10, 2013. Again sporadic activity through the start of classes.

— The class was still full close to the start of classes, but eventually got down to 25.

— As above, this section was basically full (with long waiting lists) from November 9 through January 23 (+- couple of days). However, the 2 INFM students dropped the course very early (in November itself), so the impact of not allowing them (or ENEE students) to register would have been minimal.

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