Discussion on Dealing with Increasing Undergraduate Enrollments
Led by Alan Sussman

Status

We are currently facing a huge increase in undergraduate enrollments. We currently have approximately 1840 CS majors, close to 200 CS minors, and around 300 Computer Engineering majors, all taking our classes for majors.

This year we are essentially fully utilizing all the classroom space in CSIC, from 9AM (8AM in some cases) to 5PM every day. Now that we are scheduling for next academic year (2015-16), we need to decide if we can continue teaching classes the way we have been for the last several years, or change our policies.

Several potential solutions

We are currently limited to a maximum lecture size of 145 students, which is the size of the largest room in CSIC (1115). We have also been limiting the size of upper-level (400) sections to 50 students, with rare exceptions. With current personnel (tenure track and non-tenure track faculty), including two new instructors starting in January, and current teaching loads, it will be difficult to offer additional lectures in introductory courses to meet anticipated student demand and it will also be difficult to offer enough upper-level courses (mainly by tenure track faculty) to meet anticipated demand. For example, for fall 2014, we had to limit enrollment in CMSC131 because of lack of available seats, after enrolling 537 students. That included not being able to enroll students who had declared Computer Science as a major, nor opening up enrollment to any non-CS students.

Possible solutions include:

- Increasing lecture sizes for some classes, which may require holding them in rooms outside CSIC
- Our current strategy, which is to add lectures (and associated discussion sections) to classes with high demand
• Change class structures completely for some introductory classes, e.g., flipped classrooms, blended structures, to partially or completely eliminate lectures

• Other options?

All of these solutions will require additional teaching resources, for instructional faculty and/or for graduate TAs and/or for undergraduate TAs.