Dear all,

Here is a summary of the results from the survey I just did about grad class availability in Fall 2016 (n=65, and I only asked students to participate if they intended to take courses that semester). Let's discuss this at the education committee meeting on Friday. The major takeaways I see are:

* Most students sign up for at least three grad classes and drop one.
* A huge number (48%) of students are getting in only after being on the waitlist for their top choice course.
* A non-trivial number of students were not able to take their top choice course (20%) or second choice course (17%).

I did a tiny amount of cross-tabbing and found that 1st year students had a slightly harder time getting in courses but the difference wasn't huge.

Jeff

* For Fall 2016, how many 3-credit, 600-800 level CMSC classes max were you enrolled in/waitlisted for?
  0 - 5%  
  1 - 12%  
  2 - 15%  
  3 - 52%  
  4 - 14%  
  5+ - 2%

* How many 3-credit, 600-800 level CMSC classes are you registered for?
  0 - 9%  
  1 - 32%  
  2 - 51%  
  3 - 8%  
  4 - 0%

* Were you able to enroll in your top choice course?
  N/A - 5%  
  Yes, open seats when I registered - 28%  
  Yes, got in off waitlist - 48%  
  No, on waitlist, didn't get in - 12%  
  No, didn't bother getting on waitlist - 8%  
  No, other - 0%

* Were you able to enroll in your second choice course?
  N/A - 22%  
  Yes, open seats when I registered - 38%  
  Yes, got in off waitlist - 20%  
  No, on waitlist, didn't get in - 8%  
  No, didn't bother getting on waitlist - 9%  
  No, other - 3%  
  [Other reasons: Course was not PhD qualifying so dropped; had conflict with TA]
* Were you able to enroll in your third choice course?
  N/A - 60%
  Yes, open seats when I registered - 16%
  Yes, got in off waitlist - 8%
  No, on waitlist, didn't get in - 5%
  No, didn't bother getting on waitlist - 2%
  No, other - 8% [Course was not PhD qualifying so dropped; had conflict with TA]
    [Other reasons: Expectation did not match reality; dropped from waitlist because forgot to check-in one day; save time for research; timings clashed; course was just a backup]

* How satisfied are you with the courses you are currently enrolled in?
  Extremely satisfied - 25%
  Satisfied - 57%
  Neither satisfied or not satisfied - 9%
  Unsatisfied - 9%
  Extremely unsatisfied - 0%

Other comments (abbreviated):
  * I'm an ECE student. CS should hire more in statistical machine learning.
  * There should be more 700-level courses covering more areas, and class sizes should be expanded when they get full.
  * This semester seemed unusually tough for registration.
  * In a previous semester I was surprised to get in off the waitlist very late and then had to drop anyhow because I would have been too far behind.
  * The fall semester should have more intro classes, rather than offering those in the spring.
  * Check-in for waitlists is absurd. Incoming students have an unfair disadvantage because current students can register before them.
  * Fall 2016 has fewer choices than Spring 2017.
  * Advanced special students are at a disadvantage because they don't have access to the same information as other students.
  * Course limits should be flexible to allow more people to take popular classes.
  * The xx learning courses should be offered more regularly as they are popular.
  * I was planning to take 2 courses but decided to take 1 to focus more on research.
  * Fall 2016 was very similar to Fall 2015. Also, popular courses filled up very quickly.
  * Everything was full so I added my name to a lot of waitlists.
  * Add courses on cloud computing, IR, and big data systems.
  * Fall should have more variety; spring often has "better" courses.
  * Not enough diversity of courses.
  * The variation of the qual courses is not well adjusted.
  * A first come first serve system hardly seems fair and promotes unnecessary stress.
  * There should be a general graduate algorithms or theory of computing class.
  * I had to discover for myself that I could register. I would have appreciated an explicit communication on the dates/times of registration.