The first meeting of the academic year was held on October 1, 2004. Larry Davis opened the meeting with members introducing one another. He explained, for those members who are new to the council that the purpose of the council is to provide an advisory forum for the Department Chair. Larry then began the discussion of several topics.

1. Beginning this academic year Larry appointed two Associate Chairs, one to handle Undergraduate program matters and the second to cover Graduate program issues. He is pleased with the progress made thus far but there are several matters that require some further thought and consideration. There has been an ongoing problem with the switching of TAs and GRAs up until the start of classes and sometimes beyond. This creates problems for those teaching, for the students involved, and for the payroll process. Although there have been deadlines in the past, the deadlines have not been rigorously enforced. The committee discussed the issues involved and felt that the deadline should be enforced but that there should be an escape clause so that under exceptional circumstances a change can be made beyond the deadline. A set of guidelines will be written and distributed to faculty within the next month. It is also important that information from faculty members on TAs that they wish to employ be sent to Heather/Samir. This is not being done in a uniform manner and consequently, there is confusion regarding a student’s correct title (TA or GRA). When a faculty member realizes that their research funds will not cover the costs of employing a GRA into the next semester, please notify Heather/Samir so that the student can be considered for a TA position if there are any available.

2. The Department has followed a system using Field Committees to determine a variety of matters including what courses are offered and who teaches them. The Chair of the field committee has changed each year on a rotating basis. Larry feels that this has not been uniformly successful and that in the future the Department Chair will make three year assignments regarding the Chairs for each of the committees. Larry will limit these assignments to tenured faculty members. The committee agreed on the need to do this and indicated that there is a need to define the responsibilities of the Field Committee Chairs as well as list a time schedule of when information is due and where it should be sent.

3. Faculty members are teaching seminar classes which vary in size. The Department Chair could cancel a small seminar but is reluctant to do so since this effects the students who have registered for the class and such a cancellation
would occur just prior to the start of classes. The question was how faculty members felt if some are teaching large classes vs. others with small seminars. The sentiment was that this was okay in general but it should be monitored to make sure that seminar classes are evenly distributed among faculty members. It was also suggested that the Education Office be asked to compile information for the last four semesters on the number of seminars, who taught each, and the number of students registered.

4. The title of Senior Lecturer has been approved by campus. The use of this title by the college will be discussed at a future Dean’s Administrative Council Meeting. However, it will be necessary for the Department to amend its Plan of Organization if we wish to consider using this title in the future. Members agreed it could be a positive move for the Department to have this promotional opportunity for Lecturers and assuming that there is agreement at the college level, the Department will move ahead with making this addition. It was further noted that this could be used to define high standards of performance for Lecturers in the teaching and services areas.

5. The Dean has requested a list of research areas that will be on the forefront five years hence. Last year this was discussed at the UMIACS faculty retreat and VS said he would send Larry the list compiled at that time. Some of the areas mentioned were: information integration; learning and data mining; software reliability; and bioinformatics.

The meeting was adjourned at 1pm.