The first meeting of the Education Committee for academic year 2000-01 was held on Friday, September 15 beginning at 2pm.

I. Undergraduate Topics

A. Should course syllabi be uniformly available on the web?
There was a great deal of discussion regarding mandatory vs. encouraged participation on the part of faculty members as well as the necessity for development of a template for all to follow. The outcome of the discussion was that it would be good to encourage faculty to have this information available on the web but we will not mandate the participation or structure of the course information.

B. Should CMSC 251 be a required course for the undergraduate program?
There was clarification that if this passed, the course requirement would first apply to incoming undergraduate students beginning in the academic year 01-02. One view was that by making this a required course, the number of successful students may increase who are taking upper level courses. Concern was voiced that not all students are prepared for upper level course work because they do not have an adequate foundation. It was decided that both 250 and 251 needed further syllabus development and a list of the courses that they will be prerequisites for should be developed. The topic was tabled and will be reviewed at a future Education meeting.

C. Should CMSC414 (Computer Security) and CMSC 456 (Cripto) be UL CS core courses?
Although there was some discussion, all seemed to feel that this decision would be beneficial to the curriculum. The motion was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous.

D. Prerequisite changes:
1. CMSC414 Current prerequisite: CMSC417
   Proposed prerequisites: CMSC311 and CMSC330 A motion was made and seconded. The vote was 4 opposed, 6 abstentions, and the majority in favor of the change in prerequisites.

2. CMSC417 Current prerequisites: CMSC311 and CMSC330
   Proposed prerequisites: CMSC251 and CMSC311 and CMSC330 This vote was tabled but will be discussed at a future meeting.

3. CMSC435 Current prerequisite: CMSC420
   Proposed prerequisite: CMSC412 or CMSC417 or CMSC420 or CMSC430 or CMSC433 A motion was made and seconded. The vote was none opposed, 6 abstentions, and the majority in favor of the change in prerequisites.

E. New course: CMSC298 "Special Topics in Computer Science"
Gwen felt that this course would give students exposure to different topics in CS, and would only be offered on a pass/fail basis. This would not count towards requirements for a degree. A motion was made and seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor of establishing this course.

II. Graduate Topics

A. Discussion of problems with the current course-based qualifying system Samir Khuller opened the discussion and summarized his and other
faculty members’ concerns regarding the current system. Some feel that it is a turn-off to really good students and is not effective for weaker students. The requirements for an MS and PhD degree are essentially identical. Good students are leaving for jobs and are not searching out research advisors or interesting research topics.

Shankar responded by saying that since there are no records kept on who or how many students initially apply for the MS vs. PhD program, we can not tell if a large number of the students are leaving early or if it was only their intention to only go for their MS degree. It was also voiced that some faculty did not like the comp. system and now some faculty do not like the course-based system. There may not be a solution that will please everyone. Samir will further develop a proposal on this topic and bring it before a future meeting.

III. Information presented by Larry Davis

A. In a prior document sent to the Dean and Provost, there was a summary of the teaching issues faced by CS one of which was the limited number of faculty members available to teach the number of classes needed based on student enrollment. One proposed solution was to offer fewer but larger classes which would require the use of large classrooms on campus. The Provost has indicated that he would give CS priority in the scheduling of these classrooms. This may begin with the spring semester or fall '01. Bill Gasarch and Bill Pugh were asked to discuss this with faculty members, determine which courses could be taught in a large classroom setting and initially ask for volunteers to teach these large classes. It will be necessary to provide adequate support for those teaching and evaluate the class structure. Based on the input gathered, Larry will submit a memo to Dean Halperin on the practicality of this effort and its implementation.

B. IT Undergraduate Degree
There has been interest voiced by students, parents, company officials and campus administrators in the development of an IT undergraduate degree which would emphasize programming courses and decrease theory as part of the degree requirements. Students want a degree which would permit them to qualify for various types of positions in the computer industry without meeting the more difficult requirements of a CS degree. It is felt by some that if CS does not take an active role in defining such a degree, then others will do so and this could hurt the discipline and the department. Concern was voiced that this would increase the workload of faculty members although the Provost has promised that additional resources will be provided to the department. Larry will establish a committee to develop a 3-4 page concept paper which will be submitted to the Dean.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.