Education Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 20, 2013

The first presentation was made by Jan Plane giving an overview of the program including the ACES Curriculum. (Refer to attached slides for details)

The honors program for ACES (referred to as a 2+2 program) is a two year living-learning experience for students who are housed in Ellicott Hall. The program will be moving to Prince Frederick Hall upon completion. The Program Director is Michel Cukier and Jan Plane is the Associate Director. The official program launch will be September 25. The details for ACES 2 are still being discussed/developed. The demographics slide contains some interesting information on student applications, admissions, and acceptances.

There are two required courses, HACS 100 and 102. HACS 102 requires that students build honeypots. It is a team project and the deployment will be using a UNICS platform. Student participants are very creative and enthusiastic but it has been noticed that the students come to the program with varying backgrounds. Those teaching cannot assume that all of the students have had similar academic training which results in some students being more proficient in certain areas than others.

This is the first cyber Honors Program in the country with the goal to promote an interdisciplinary major. Major financial support for this program was provided by the Northrop Grumman and additional donations are beginning to come through from other sources.

Alan Sussman presented the second topic on the ECE Cybersecurity Concentration. (See attached information)

ECE hired three new professors this past year which has permitted staffing of the “concentration” curriculum structure outlined and discussed in previous meetings. This latest proposal does not include a 499 course option as had a previous outline of the concentration. Following is a list of the four courses from which a student must select two courses:

ENEE 459C, Computer Security
ENEE 459D, Security Data Science
MATH 456, Cryptology (MATH 456 is different from CMSC 456 in course content)
CMSC 414, Computer and Network Security

Neil Spring suggested that an “or” be added between ENEE 459C and CMSC 414. The point stressed is that these two courses must present different information if students are permitted to register for both courses. Currently, both courses seem to have nearly-identical syllabi. Alan also said there is no change in the priority for ECE students registering for CMSC 414.
Alan was asked to tell ECE that the CS faculty wants to accommodate the students and Engr. faculty but would like these further changes/clarifications made to the concentration program. In principle, the Education Committee members were unanimous in support of the changes that had been made by Engr. with the caveat that the suggested changes are incorporated into the concentration program.

Jeff Foster began by updating the faculty on a variety of items on the graduate program. This past year was the first since the change in the department’s internal rule that Ph.D. students have four years to candidacy. The outcome was that eleven students did not meet the deadline. Jeff spoke to all of the students who were given an extension and all seem to be performing well except for one student.

By fall 2015 there will be a change in the software program used by the graduate school. Currently, there has not been a decision reached on what will happen to “Megs”.

There is still one date open for CS faculty to present a research talk.

Jeff asked the faculty if CS graduate students should be given priority to register for department courses (establish a particular date)? The question was raised if all or only some courses are oversubscribed? It was pointed out that any change to the registration process must be approved through VPAC. Suggestions such as, using the first day of class as a release date was mentioned. Wait-listing courses with the permission of the department could be used to limit course size and/or give preference to CS students. Jeff will investigate what techniques could be used if some limitations are imposed on registration for graduate courses and report back to the committee.

The last topic was a discussion on department representatives on preliminary and dissertation committees. Currently, two out of five committee members must be “regular” CS faculty members. A question was asked as to whether there is a problem? Why is this being raised now as an issue? There was a lot of discussion about the central issue of whether technical expertise is more important than broad impact of a student’s dissertation? One suggestion was that there should be three CS faculty members on a committee with one being the department representative. It was emphasized that the student’s advisor should be responsible for the dissertation’s value and that thorough research was conducted by the student (advisor ensures high-quality dissertation). The intent of the Dean’s representative is to ensure that the process is conducted in a fair manner.

The internal department rule is that the graduate office assigns the department representative for the prelim committee. Jeff will consider the issues raised during the discussion and will, in consultation with the faculty, develop a new procedure for assigning department representatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05pm.