The meeting was convened at 2:05pm by Howard Elman.

Howard introduced the first topic, “Modification of Deadlines in the Ph.D. Program”. His intention had been to announce a decision based on past discussion of the topic but Howard received a sufficient number of comments following the last meeting, so he felt that further discussion at this meeting was warranted.

The original plan was to reduce the time permitted to complete 7 courses (go from 2 ½ years to 2 years). The goal is to achieve a graduate program that looks better to campus and is more in line with peer institutions. It is also to set expectations for students and push them into completing their course work sooner.

Because some faculty members felt strongly that it is equally or even more important to have students begin research sooner, two options on that theme exist:

1. Course requirements could remain at 7 courses within a 4 semester timeframe
   OR
2. Course requirements could be lowered to 6 courses with course #7 being structured as a research project. This course would need to be defined at a later time.

There was general support for reducing the time to complete 7 courses to 4 semesters with the option of granting exceptions when there is proof that a student is making good progress and/or the delay may be due to his/her involvement in research. This change would only affect incoming students to the program.

However, there were some concerns voiced to either option as follows:

1. There should be more emphasis on students getting into research within their first semester and every semester thereafter since research is important for obtaining the Ph.D. degree. If research delays a student’s completion of their course work, why should the faculty care?
2. Being a TA, taking 7 courses within 4 semesters and working on research, may be too difficult for some students to handle but not, necessarily, for all.

Howard will take these comments into consideration and submit a proposal in the near future.
The second agenda topic, “Modification of the Graduate Numerical Analysis Sequence” was not discussed since the information Howard expected to have had not yet been received. The topic will be discussed at a future meeting.
Jeff Hollingsworth introduced the discussion on CMSC 216 and noted that a vote would be taken at the meeting due to upcoming campus deadlines.

A motion was made from the floor to “Go forward with CMSC 216 without a second track (discussed at the last meeting)”. The motion was seconded and a general discussion followed.

Proposal 131 -> 132 -> 216 -- \_/ 351
\-->250 -- / \ 330

Discussion: The question was asked, “What is CMSC 212?” The courses title is “Introduction to Low Level Programming”

It was emphasized that co- and pre-requisite changes do not require a long lead time so the discussion regarding co and pre-requisites can be conducted at a later time. A program change has to do with courses that are needed for graduation.

The proposal is not changing the number of credits for graduation. It will provide students with more choice in the courses they take. The introduction of CMSC 216 assumes the creation of several 1 credit courses which must be defined in the future.

Concerns voiced about CMSC 216 included:

1. The lack of arithmetic and architecture in the course
2. By agreeing to the proposal, the department is giving up what use to be accepted as ‘core knowledge’ that all students were exposed to in the UG curriculum.
3. Students will only have one semester of C programming
4. Predicts that the problems with CMSC 216 won’t show-up for sometime because the students who are currently taking the course were hand-picked and the course has 2 TAs so that the students are getting more individualized attention then most regular courses.
5. The course doesn’t cover any information on computer hardware
6. There are a group of students who are not ready to move quickly through what is considered “basic concepts”. Women and minority students may not have been taught this material in high school so they can find CMSC 131 and 132 difficult. It was further noted that there is a jump in approach from these two courses to CMSC 212. The level of support and the type of projects changes from the lower level courses, and this causes difficulty for some students in CMSC 212.

A question was raised asking what type of programming projects will be required. The response was there is a mixture of 6 projects in CMSC 216 as currently outlined.
The suggestion was made that the department needs to define what is considered “core knowledge”…a distinction should be made between what essential concepts must be taught for a student to receive an UG degree in CS vs. what information is ideal but falls into the extra category of information to be taught. There isn’t time within a 4 year program to cover all of the areas/topics that faculty members would like students to know prior to graduation.

An amendment was made to add “floating points and integer representation of numbers” to the course content for CMSC 216. It was agreed that this information should be in the course content and spelled out in the course outline.

A vote was called with 24 in favor of CMSC 216 (based on the original proposal as amendment) and 11 against establishing the course. The motion passed.

Jeff asked for volunteers to look at existing courses (titles, perquisites and descriptions) since some courses have not been reviewed in a long time. Any one interested in helping with the review should contact Jeff.

The 4th topic, “The Digital Humanities Honors Program” was summarized by Jeff (see attached document). MITH stands for the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities which has been established as a new living learning honors program. This program is on a fast track (backed by the Provost) and the first students will be admitted this spring for a start in fall 2010. The department has been asked to teach some courses in the new program. The department will use existing courses and modify others, if needed, such as the new course currently being taught by Bobby and Samir. Jeff would also like volunteers to work on developing/modifying other acceptable courses for the program.

The last topic, “I-Series Courses” is another area being emphasized by campus with courses being offered in spring 2010. The administration has offered to pay $5K to a faculty member as an overload or $5K to a faculty member who develops and teaches the course as part of his/her teaching load (if the department relieves the faculty member of his/her regular CS teaching assignment.). The intent of the I-Series is to put forward more courses in a variety of disciplines that appeal to and can be handled by the majority of campus students.

Just prior to the end of the meeting, Howard announced that the Graduate Student Visit Day will be held on Friday, March 26, 2010. Details will be provided by the Graduate Program Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.