Education Meeting Minutes
Friday, November, 20, 2020

The meeting was convened at 3:02 pm.

According to the by-laws, there must be a quorum for voting, this would mean at least half of the members who are not on sabbatical or leave of absence must be present. 38 people were needed to meet quorum. Quorum was met with 45 people. Quorum was met at 3:07 PM.

1. Department's Broadening Participation in Computing (BPC) Plan: Plane presented this information item. This information item was sent via email prior to the meeting.

UMD is the 5th computer science department in the US to be approved. Here is a link to the Department's BPC document. The computer science department needs to report BPC activity in the annual report. Here are the BPC reporting guidelines. Here is a list of Verified Departmental BPC plans. Please use this form to report BCP activities.

2. Permanent number for CMSC 389N : Mount presented the proposal and discussion. This proposal outline was sent via email prior to the meeting.

CMSC389N (Single Page Web Application Development With JavaScript) has been offered at least 14 times over the past 6 years and regularly attracts around 100 students. The proposal is to give it a permanent number.

> **CMSC33?** (Title TBD)
> **Prerequisites**: C- or better in CMSC 216 and CMSC 250
> **Credits**: 3
> **Course summary**: This course provides an introduction to the development of single page Web-based applications (SPA's) using JavaScript for both the front end client and back-end API/service. We will be developing applications using a micro-service architecture pattern and discussing throughout the evolution of web application architectures and current trends.

Porter asked which area this course could be assigned. Golub gave historical perspective. This course was originally included in 1-credit course offerings, then was reworked into a 3 credit course. Levin brought up the point that the course name may need to be changed to not include JavaScript in the title. Deshpande believes that the content and skills are otherwise not covered in other courses. Hajiaghayi questioned if JavaScript was the best language to present the course with. Levin confirmed he believed JavaScript was the best language to use. Yoon agreed that JavaScript needs to be taken from the title since other languages are included. Mount moved to create a committee to examine the issue further.

No votes were taken on this discussion.

3. Update on Graduate Admissions : Duraiswami presented this information item. This information item was sent via email prior to the meeting.

Theis from graduate admissions presented on reviewing admissions applications via TerpEngage. Theis reviewed the process of adding notes to an application review. Every faculty member will be assigned applicants to review. Depending on your level of access, you may be able to view applicants outside of your assigned caseload.

4. CMSC 330 a 4-credit course: Mamat and Marsh presented the proposal and discussion. This proposal outline was sent via email prior to the meeting.

CMSC 330 has 150 minutes of lecture per week, but also a discussion section on top of that. It is also pretty heavy in terms of workload: 6-7 programming projects and 3 exams including the final. The semester in which students take 330 and 351 is pretty severe in terms of workload, and it makes sense to have the credit-load reflect that.

> **CMSC330**: Organization of Programming Languages Syllabus Repository
> **Credits**: 3
> **Prerequisite**: Minimum grade of C- in CMSC250 and CMSC216.
> **Course summary**: A study of programming languages, including their syntax, semantics, and implementation. Several different models of languages are discussed, including dynamic, scripting (e.g., Ruby, Python) functional (e.g., OCaml, Haskell, Scheme), and memory safe systems programming (e.g., Rust). Explores language features such as formal syntax, scoping and binding of variables, higher-order programming, typing, and type polymorphism. Introduces finite automata, context free grammar, parsing, lambda calculus, and basics of security attacks and software security.

Mount commented that 330 did not always have as many assignments as it's current version does in FA20. Mamat suggested increasing the workload to reflect 4 credits. Mount asked if there was an option to make the course 3.5 credits, based on the established guidelines for credit count of courses. Golub questioned if we should consider making 351 a 4-credit course due to the workload. Levin suggested we review course surveys to see if students are indeed perceiving 330 to be more work than they expect of a 3-credit course. Zwicker pointed out that we will need to add a discussion to make the course 4 credits, but adding the extra section could be problematic for students. Mount requested that people contact Mamat or Hicks if they are interested in further discussion.

No votes were taken on this discussion.

5. 1-credit course for TA Training: Plane presented this information item. This information item was sent via email prior to the meeting.

Proposed course description:

CMSC 371: Fundamentals of Teaching CS
Credits: 1
Prerequisites: Minimum grade of B- in CMSC131; or permission of instructor.
Restrictions: Must be planning to work as a TA for CMSC; or permission of instructor.
Course Description: This is a 300-level 1 credit course for any student planning to become a TA or currently in their first semester of being a TA. Topics include legal and logistic issues of being a TA as well as pedagogical and curricular portions of being a TA in CMSC.

1. The objective of this course is to raise TA awareness of:
2. their legal obligations with FERPA and mandatory reporting.
3. their responsibilities to the instructor and to the students and the professional conduct expectations.
4. the classroom and information management tools available.
5. the differentiated instruction methods they should be applying.
6. the office hours, grading and recitation teaching processes, methods and tools that should be applied in a TA position.
7. the biases and impacts in the teaching environment.

Possible Instructors: Jan Plane; Dave Mount; Evan Golub

TA's need propper training, including training on FERPA and mandatory reporting. Plane reviewed the proposed course content that offered teaching tools as well as the legal information. Duraiswami showed concern of whether graduate TA's would be required to complete this training.

6. Should advanced students be allowed to take intro courses to boost their GPA?: Mount presented this discussion. This discussion outline was sent via email prior to the meeting.

[From Larry Herman:] A major issue with the department's intro course sequence is that there are far too many students taking these courses (particularly CMSC 132 and especially CMSC 131) despite knowing much or all of the course material already. There is a small number of advanced students who wish to go back and repeat CMSC 131 in the same semester, presumably to boost their GPAs.

Why this is a problem:

1. It's a waste of time for advanced students to be repeating CMSC 131/132.
2. We need the seats in the intro courses for students who really need to take them. (Since students register by credit- those with more credits register earlier- those who are repeating these courses typically are able to get seats before those taking them for the first time can register.)
3. Although it's just a small number of students who repeat these courses who are multiple semesters past taking them, it's nevertheless unfair for students taking these

courses for the first time to be competing against more advanced students with more (often significantly more) experience. Even if it's a small number of students it's demoralizing for novice students to be competing against those whose knowledge and experience is already far greater.

We need to be able to allow students who legitimately need or want to repeat the intro courses to do so. If a student wants to take advantage of the “freshman forgiveness” policy they should be allowed to, but it is suggested that they only be given one semester past any of these courses to repeat it.

A proposal to address this could be to add these restrictions to courses:

1. Add to CMSC 131: "Not open to students who have successfully completed CMSC 132."
2. Add to CMSC 132: "Not open to students who have successfully completed CMSC 216 and 250."
3. Add to CMSC 216 and 250: "Not open to students who have successfully completed CMSC 330 and 351.”

This would give students one semester past a course to repeat it. For example, with these restrictions a student who passed CMSC 131 but perhaps with a mediocre or barely passing grade could repeat it before taking CMSC 132, or could repeat it concurrently with CMSC 132, but not after completing CMSC 132.

Ryan said that this does happen because GPA is not factored in but we may make it more difficult to register. Daraiswami wants students to be able to do it. Samet says he has seen this often as a tactic for people to boost grades. Levin suggested a model where the first 1 or 2 classes are offered as a pass/fail. Mount wants to revisit this discussion.

No votes were taken on this discussion.

The meeting ended at 4:30 PM.