Executive Committee Meeting  
Computer Science  
Date: February 9, 2007

1 Attendees


2 Minutes

Ted Brown moved to accept the minutes as read. The motion was passed without dissent.

3 Announcements

3.1 Driscoll

The APO, Mr. Joe Driscoll has left to work, as assistant to the Chair of Computer Science at Hunter College. The position will be advertised soon.

3.2 Science re-organization

CUNY is continuing in their reorganization of the sciences: Lab sciences will be run differently. Colleges will have more input on the number of students that will be accepted in a program and there will be joint doctoral degrees with some of the colleges so far the programs affected are Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry and Physics.

3.3 Student funding

The President of the Graduate Center has obtained money to fund a number of students at $18,000 a year for five years plus in-state tuition and perhaps health benefits. This will phase in over three years. The fellowships require that in years two, three and four the students are Chancellor Fellows (GTF’s) In order to fully fund this initiative, departments will have to use some of their University Fellowship money for this purpose. Thus there will be less UF money to distribute to students. Ted has been using fellowship money to fund the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition and to help students afford going to conferences.

To get to use these fellowships the department needs to contribute $9000 per fellowship to the program. We have been allocated 4 GTF’s for next year and
must make a decision on whether to enhance any of them to take advantage of these new awards.

We also have four science fellowships ($24K each), which we split into eight half science fellowships ($12K each). At least an equivalent amount of money needs to be given to the student in some fashion (grant or teaching). Under the new guidelines for using UF money, we will not be able give students money in an amount less than in-state tuition.

4 New Business//Second Exam

Currently the first part of the second exam is essentially a literature review and the second part is the proposal. However, there are various understandings of this, and the exams vary a lot in the way they are implemented and in their quality. Ted proposes to have a somewhat different mechanism. The first part will be supervised by a standing committee and held on fixed days of the year (four or five days). The student will present material on a broad area to a broader committee. The goal is to even the field and reduce the variability of the quality of the students that pass.

Standing committee of something like eight people.

4.1 Issues

1. What if the committee doesn’t have adequate expertise to judge the student’s presentation? Can the mentor be present?

2. What will be the areas? Who will choose the topics? Will there be a reading list for different areas?

3. Will there be defined areas?

4. Can a student put together an appropriate presentation?

4.2 Purposes

According to Ted Brown:

1. Oral presentation

2. Reduce the variability in quality of the second exams

3. Standardize quality, identify students who are not making progress

4. Have a group of senior faculty active in research see the students

There will be a time deadline at the end of the third year.
4.3 Other views

1. The second exam should move the student along rather than serve as a barrier. It could be the first two chapters of the thesis.

2. Why not combine the first and second parts?

3. Address matching students to mentors and making sure the mentoring process works.

4. One out of five topics, deeper study, related or not related, problem given to student 6 months - a year in advance with a committee to support and evaluate.

5. Need an educational purpose for exam

6. It’s a heavy burden on standing committee and what’s their motivation?

Since no consensus developed, the subject was postponed for another meeting.

5 New Courses

New courses are on the books that are important to the research that students will be doing in an area. These are for the second year. Move the readings class, which is required in the first year, to the second year, and make the research course required for the first year, as a one credit course. This would make the second semester seven credits, saving non-resident students tuition costs.

Questions: What is a readings course? Should not have textbook and exams. It should be a reading list.

Matt Johnson didn’t like pushing the readings course to the second year; he likes getting into the research quickly.

We could have two readings courses total, one in each year. Vote

1. 2a: Reduce the credits on the Research in CUNY course from three to one. Passed with one dissent

2. 2b: Replace the first year requirement of taking a readings class with the Research in CUNY class. unanimous

3. 3: Requirement: students must take either a readings class or one of the new second year courses. unanimous

5.1 Graduate Center Faculty Membership

Four inactive faculty members were contacted about their interest in teaching or service at the Graduate Center. Two of the four answered. They have until February 20 to answer.