Graduate CSS Committee Meeting – Minutes

February 11, 2022

10 – 11 a.m.

Virtually via Zoom

Attendance

Voting Faculty: Mohamed Ali, Wei Cheng*****, Wes Lloyd, Eyhab Al-Masri, Paulo Baretto*****, Martine De Cock, Ka Yee Yeung, Anderson Nascimento, Juhua Hu

*absent for vote

Non-voting Staff: Victoria Olive, Rachel Long

Absent: Donald Chinn, Ankur Teredesai

Items

1) Approve minutes of last meeting: Jan 21, 2022

> **Moved: A. Nascimento**
>
> **Seconded: K. Yeung**
>
> ***Eligible to vote: 11***
>
> **7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 2 voting faculty absent for vote, 2 voting faculty absent from meeting**

2) PhD policies

(a) MS thesis proposal requirement for new transfer PhD students

In the last meeting's straw poll, this committee voted in favor of the proposed requirement for students transferring into our program. Essentially, we will ask students to write a thesis proposal similar to the one completed in our Master's program. . If a student completes their proposal early, we can encourage them to start preliminary work and get a jump start on their research. Students transferring into our program who have already completed a Masters-level thesis will have the option to go through the waiver process, which will begin by students submitting an electronic copy of their thesis (PDF file) to the graduate committee. In most cases, if the student completed their Master's thesis in an accredited

Computer Science program, we will most likely accept their waiver request without a review. The exception would be if the committee doesn't recognize the university or the research topic, which would require a committee review. If a student receives the waiver, they will still need 90 credits to graduate with a PhD. This leaves 10 extra credits available for the student, which they can use to take any graduate course (as long as it's TCSS 510 or above). The committee agreed that the PhD application needs to students are expected to have completed a Masters-level thesis.

3) PhD Student Funds

The Chair reminded the committee that the survey to request PhD student funds was sent out a few weeks ago, and asked that everyone submit their request as soon as possible – the survey will remain open until the end of winter quarter. As a reminder, we fund 2 quarters (SET funds one quarter, the individual graduate advisor covers one quarter) for 3 students as graduate research assistants, and the graduate school will fund the 3rd quarter. This support is especially helpful for international and out of state students, since they are able to receive in-state tuition if working under this role. In our next meeting, we will review the applications for PhD student funds and discuss. This committee also has the option to use SET money for current students, and not accept the money from the graduate school (top scholar funds from the graduate school can only be used for new incoming students).

4) Combined BS/MS

The sub-committee is still working on this, and is waiting on feedback. Updates will be provided in our next meeting.

5) Possibility of offering TCSS 598 in spring

TCSS 598 will be taught by the Committee Chair this summer, but starting next year, we can offer 598 in spring quarter.

6) PhD students and taking 1 credit only if done with coursework

The Chair received confirmation that if a student is done with their course load, they can take 1 credit per quarter. This will greatly help students with the cost of tuition. This committee was originally under the impression that students could only do this for one quarter, but learned that students can do this for as many quarters as needed. For immigration purposes, students will be considered full time. However, it's important to remember that if students serve as Research Assistants, they must be registered for 10

credits unless they get approval for a reduced course load from the Graduate School (by submitting a petition).

7) Evaluation and future trajectory of underprepared PhD students who are not ready for engagement in CS research projects

One committee member proposed requiring an annual evaluation, where current PhD students will complete a self-assessment and receive an evaluation from their current advisors. This will help us pinpoint which students are falling behind or haven't found an advisor yet. For students who fail the annual evaluation, we can give 1 quarter warning, and if they fail again they can be placed on academic probation. Student's place in the program will be in jeopardy if they do not pass this review after multiple attempts.

Another option is to require a general exam, which has already been documented in the PhD program proposal. This general exam includes multiple presentations where students will define their line of research. Students will then collect feedback from committee members, update their proposal, and then complete the defense.

8) Review of PhD applications

The committee discussed adding a Zoom interview portion to the PhD application process. In this interview, the committee can get a better idea of who the applicant is, their research background and interests. One of the graduate advisors also suggested adding a question to the application to see who they are interested in having as their advisor. The application could then be directed to the faculty members they list, who can decide whether they want to interview the student or not before inviting the student to a Zoom interview.

9) Documentation of logistics for general exams

This proposal is still being drafted, and will be presented at a future meeting.

10) SET Research Showcase

This will take place on April 22nd. An email will be sent out to all committee members with more information.

11) GRE waiver case

The committee reviewed a Master's program application from a student who is currently in the process of receiving a Software Development Engineering certificate here at SET. This student will not be finished with the certificate until after spring quarter. Since this application is for the spring quarter, the committee agreed that they should delay this decision until the student completes the certificate and we receive instructor input. This waiver could potentially be granted if this student were to apply for summer or fall admission.

12) Graduate committee meetings same day as CSS meeting at 10am