

CSS Graduate Committee Meeting

Date: Oct 3, 2025

Time: 10:00 – 11:00 AM PDT

Location: CP 303 & Virtual (Zoom)

Minutes Prepared By: Wei Cai

Attendance

Voting Faculty: Wes Lloyd, Juhua Hu, Wei Cheng, Ka Yee Yeung, Martine De Cock, Mohamed Ali, Donald Chinn, Paulo Barreto, Wei Cai, Zhi-Qi Cheng, Ankur Teredesai, Dongfang Zhao, Xutong Liu

Non-Voting Faculty and Staff: Rachel Crook, Anisha Joshi

Absent: Damiano Torre (conference), Eyhab Al-Masri (left early)

1. Approval of May 30, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Motion: Donald Chinn
- Second: Ka Yee Yeung
- Vote: In Favor – 10 | Against – 0 | Abstain – 0 | Absent – 2

2. Approval of September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Discussion:
 - Martine requested minutes be shared at least 24 hours in advance for review. Wes acknowledged the late distribution due to time constraints.
 - Eyhab Al-Masri noted his attendance at the May 30 meeting was not recorded and will follow up offline.
- Action: Vote on September 17 minutes deferred to the next meeting (November 14, 2025). Wes to share revised minutes and clarify inaccuracies. Rachel to ensure website update (removing PhD application restriction) is completed.

3. Graduate Admissions Update

- Presenter: Anisha Joshi (Recruitment) and Rachel Crook (Admissions)
- Recruitment (Anisha):
 - Upcoming events: Virtual info sessions (October 14, October 28), in-person campus visit (October 17), Transfer Advisor Walks Up (October 10), Grad Night rescheduled to November 19.
 - Faculty participation emphasized; 4/21 summer GC-SDE attendees applied and were admitted, showing the impact of faculty engagement.
 - Anisha to send calendar invites for faculty to join recruitment events.
- Admissions (Rachel):
 - MSCSS: 52 confirmed/enrolled (up from 45), 63 paid deposits, 11 deferred, 31 continuing, totaling ~83 students.
 - PhD: 4 new students registered, 1 deferred to winter, 14 continuing, totaling ~18. One student (Varun, advised by Ka Yee) pending active status; Rachel to follow up due to visa deadlines for international students.
 - Funding (PhD): 3 new admits funded by Top Scholar, 1 by Carwein (1-year academic funding). Ankur raised concerns about ensuring at least 2-year funding for PhD students to avoid issues if grants are not secured.

- GCSDE: 21 paid deposits, 15 registered, 4 deferred to Autumn 2026, with melt due to time and cost constraints. Rachel to survey students who dropped to understand reasons.
- GRE: Not required for any program but strengthens applications (per Xutong Liu's question).
- 4 +1 Discussion:
 - Martine De Cock noted she's been informing students about the 4+1 program (allowing undergraduates to take up to 2 graduate courses counting toward MSCSS), but Rachel clarified it's not yet implemented.
 - Original proposal (found by Kira) capped at 5 students/year with a 3.6 GPA requirement. Ka Yee questioned the cap, suggesting it's not a hard threshold and capacity should be program-wide.
 - Rachel and Wes confirmed the proposal is approved but needs administrative implementation. Rachel uploaded the proposal for review.
- Action: Rachel to survey GC-SDE dropouts. Faculty to ensure long-term PhD funding plans. Anisha to coordinate faculty participation in recruitment events. Wes to add 4+1 implementation to the next meeting agenda and encourage faculty input. Rachel to work with undergraduate advisors to clarify and promote the program.

4. MS in AI Foundations & Applications (MS AIFA) Update

- Presenter: Juhua Hu
- Update:
 - Met with advisory board last week; added new course "AI Deployment and Program Management" based on feedback due to high industry demand and limited electives for students without technical backgrounds.
 - Timeline updated: PNOI to be shared with faculty for feedback within two weeks, with minor revisions due by October 29, 2025.
 - Ka Yee Yeung inquired about the capstone (2 credits, 1 credit per quarter). Juhua clarified it involves one-on-one mentoring with a supervisor based on mutual interest, less intensive than the 5-credit MSCSS capstone.
 - Ka Yee proposed using existing TCSS 598 (variable credit) as an alternative to avoid faculty bandwidth issues and accommodate state-sponsored students restricted from 600-level courses. Juhua and Ankur Teredesai supported this suggestion.
- Action: Juhua to incorporate TCSS 598 as a capstone alternative and share updated PNOI for faculty feedback.

6. PhD and MSCSS Handbook Updates

- Discussion:
 - No faculty had reviewed the handbooks due to limited time since the last meeting and quarter start.

- Martine suggested separate emails with direct links to MSCSS and PhD handbooks for review. Ankur proposed tagging faculty in SharePoint for automatic reminders.
- Juhua requested handbook links be resent due to access issues.
- Action: Wes to send separate emails with MSCSS and PhD handbook links and tag faculty in SharePoint for review. Vote on handbooks deferred to November 14, 2025 meeting.

7. Tuition Exemption for State Employees

- Discussion:
 - Current UW Tacoma policy (since summer 2021) limits state employees to 12 credits of tuition exemption for graduate programs, covering only 4 CSS courses (e.g., TCSS 543, 558, 598).
 - Martine referenced a 2020 proposed policy by Mohamed Ali limiting credits to 12, likely due to budget constraints. Mohamed clarified that courses requiring one-on-one work (e.g., capstone) were excluded, and no faculty decision was made to select specific courses.
 - Ankur argued the policy may be outdated given CSS's strong enrollment and suggested allowing all 500-level courses with capacity. He proposed a flexible policy reviewed annually based on enrollment.
 - Rachel emailed the registrar to clarify restrictions and explore adding more courses (e.g., ECE, MSIT).
- Action: Rachel and Wes to follow up with the registrar on expanding eligible courses and overriding the 12-credit limit. Update to be provided at the next meeting.

8. Faculty Coffee Hour (Graduate Student Mentorship)

- Presenter: Juhua Hu
- Details: Scheduled for October 29, 2025, 12:00–1:00 PM, with lunch provided. Martine De Cock and Ka Yee Yeung to share mentoring experiences, especially for junior faculty. Faculty-only event.
- Discussion: Ankur noted a conflict with TCSS 598 (11:30–1:30 PM), preventing his and student attendance.
- Action: Juhua to encourage faculty participation and consider rescheduling to avoid conflicts.

9. Next Meeting

- Date: November 14, 2025

Action Items Recap

- Wes Lloyd:

- Share revised September 17 minutes and handbook links (MSCSS, PhD) via separate emails and tag faculty in SharePoint.
 - Follow up with registrar on tuition exemption policy and course expansion.
 - Add 4+1 program implementation to November 14 agenda.
 - Discuss TCSS 598 workload concerns with Ankur and Rachel offline.
- Rachel Crook:
 - Ensure website update (PhD application restriction removal) is completed by Chloe/Flow.
 - Survey GC-SDE dropouts for reasons.
 - Coordinate with undergraduate advisors to implement and promote 4+1 program.
 - Follow up with registrar on tuition exemption policy.
 - Discuss TCSS 598 workload concerns with Ankur and Wes offline.
- Juhua Hu:
 - Incorporate TCSS 598 as MS AIFA capstone alternative and share updated PNOI for feedback by October 29.
 - Encourage faculty participation in October 29 Faculty Coffee Hour and consider rescheduling to avoid conflicts.
- Anisha Joshi: Send calendar invites for recruitment events (October 14, 17, 28; November 19).
- All Faculty: Review MSCSS and PhD handbooks before November 14 meeting.