

CSS Graduate Committee Meeting

Date: Nov 7, 2025

Time: 10:00 – 11:00 AM PDT

Location: CP 303 & Virtual (Zoom)

Minutes Prepared By: Eyhab Al-Masri

Attendance

Voting Faculty: Wes J. Lloyd, Juhua Hu, Wei Cheng, Wei Cai, Zhi-Qi Cheng, Mohamed Ali, Donald D. Chinn, Ankur Teredesai, Eyhab Al-Masri, Ling-Hong Hung, Xutong Liu

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

Absent: Martine De Cock, Ka Yee Yeung, Paulo Barreto, Dongfang Zhao, Damiano Torre

1. Approval of Sept 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Motion: Donald Chinn
- Second: Juhua Hu (via chat)
- Vote: In Favor – 11 | Against – 0 | Abstain – 0 | Absent – 5

2. October 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Faculty will continue reviewing the October 3 minutes offline.
- **Action:**
 - Discuss and vote at the next meeting (Dec 5, 2025).

3. Announcements:

- **Generative AI Faculty Development Session** (Wes made an announcement):
 - Faculty development session on integrating generative AI into course design on Wed, Nov 12 (organized by Yan Bai and Monika).
 - Graduate faculty participation encouraged.
- **TCSS 598 Seminar Format & Future Update:**
 - Ankur reported that TCSS 598 has been restructured and is no longer dependent on weekly faculty speakers.
 - **Action** (Ankur):
 - Prepare a brief (~10 min) update at a future meeting describing the new format and expectations.

4. Recruitment Activities & Graduate Applications:

- **Recruitment Activities** (Anisha)
 - Not much in terms of recruitment activities this month due to Thanksgiving.
 - Upcoming events:
 - SET Graduate Program online information session scheduled on November 25th
 - Between November 12th-14 SET will be at Seattle U for Cybersecurity Education in the Age of AI
 - Grad Night on November 19th
- **Class outreach:**
 - Ankur inquired about recruiting students by visiting undergraduate classes. Also recommended that recruitment effort reach undergraduate courses by visiting (400-level and similar) classes

- Anisha plans to visit upper-division classes (400-level and similar) to promote:
 - The 4+1 BS/MS CSS program.
 - Graduate applications and info sessions.
- Faculty may invite Anisha to visit their classes.
- **Graduate Applications** (Rachel)
 - Applications opened on November 1st (Saturday)
 - Two MSCSS applications received so far (still early)

5. MS in AI Foundations & Applications (MS AIFA)

- Juhua reported ongoing discussions with OAA (Seattle) on the MS AIFA program and related graduate certificates.
- Plan is to:
 - Share three PNOIs (two certificates + MS AIFA) with faculty for feedback by late November.
 - Submit PNOIs in early December after incorporating comments.
- **Actions:**
 - Juhua:
 - Circulate PNOIs and integrate faculty feedback.
 - All Faculty: Review and comment promptly once the PNOIs are shared.

6. Tuition Exemption for State Employees

- Rachel reported that Wes submitted all TCSS 510–599 courses for tuition-exemption eligibility.
- Courses numbered 600+ and 700+ remain ineligible.
- The 12-credit cap on tuition-exemption for graduate study is confirmed and cannot be raised.
- CSS currently appears to be the only SET unit with courses listed; other units (ECE, MSIT) need to do the same.
- **Actions:**
 - Wes:
 - Raise this at the Nov 21 SET-wide meeting and encourage other units to submit their course lists.
 - Rachel:
 - Inform the committee once the registrar responds on the expanded CSS course list.

7. Four plus One BS/MS CSS Program Implementation

- The 4+1 BS/MS CSS program is approved, but not yet entered in DARS.
- For each participating student, Rachel must file a petition so up to 12 graduate credits can double-count and be billed at the undergraduate rate.
- Graduate School/GEMS confirmed in writing that this petition-based approach is acceptable and that a single contact will review them.
- An updated planning grid is needed to:
 - Align with actual course offerings (e.g., timing of TCSS 598).
 - Provide clear guidance to students and undergraduate advisors for a Fall 2026 launch.
- **Actions:**
 - Wes, Rachel, Wei Cheng, Kira:

- Revise the 4+1 planning grid and align it with upcoming CSS scheduling.
- Wes:
 - Meet with undergraduate CS advisors to brief them on the program and revised grid.
- Anisha:
 - After the grid and messaging are finalized, visit upper-division classes to promote the 4+1 pathway.

8. PhD Student Seminar Scheduling

- Daniel (PhD student) surveyed students and identified two possible seminar dates:
 - Fri, Nov 21 (noon)
 - Fri, Dec 5 (noon)
- Ankur and others recommended Dec 5 because:
 - Nov 21 conflicts with Thanksgiving travel and a scheduled general exam (Carla's).
 - Dec 5 is closer to the end of classes and easier for new students to attend.
 - Only 12 of 19 active PhD students responded to the survey.
- **Actions:**
 - Wes:
 - Target Dec 5 for the seminar and recruit 1–2 additional faculty to help organize and participate.
 - If faculty coordination is not feasible, consider moving the seminar to winter quarter.
 - All Faculty:
 - Encourage PhD advisees to respond to the survey and attend the seminar.

9. MSCSS and PhD Handbook Updates

- Rachel is revising both handbooks based on comments:
 - MSCSS: wording and clarity changes in progress.
 - PhD: many sections are fixed Graduate School language; edits are more limited.
- Because revisions are still in progress and some faculty were absent, voting on approval was deferred.
- **Actions:**
 - Rachel:
 - Continue revisions with the goal of having both handbooks ready for approval at the next meeting.
 - All Faculty:
 - Review the latest drafts and add any remaining comments before the next meeting.

10. CSS Graduate Faculty Nominations

- Nominations:
 - Xutong Li
 - Chris Marriott
- Review and vote will take place at the Nov 21 full faculty meeting.
- Process at the full faculty meeting:

- Motion and second to approve grad faculty status.
 - Separate motion where PhD supervision endorsement is requested.
- As a teaching professor, Chris Marriott is eligible for a renewable 5-year graduate faculty appointment.
- Ankur emphasized the importance of a short **chair's statement** for each nomination to standardize expectations and streamline discussion.
- **Actions:**
 - Wes:
 - Prepare chair's statements for both nominees prior to the Nov 21 meeting.
 - All Faculty:
 - Review nomination materials ahead of time and be prepared to vote.

11. UWT Graduate Merit Scholarships

- CSS allocation for 2025–26:
 - Total Graduate Merit: \$12,568
 - PhD portion: \$3,927
- New policy from UWT: only in-state students are eligible.
 - Faculty previously advocated for including out-of-state students, but UWT has not changed this policy.
- GPA threshold:
 - UWT recommends a minimum GPA of 3.3; CSS may set a higher threshold (e.g., 3.5).
- Timing and eligibility:
 - Nominations for winter + spring disbursement must reach Financial Aid by Dec 1.
 - Rachel prefers opening nominations now and considering both quarters; a spring-only option exists with a March deadline.
 - Juhua asked whether a student currently on leave but returning in winter remains eligible; Rachel confirmed they are eligible as long as they are enrolled in the quarter the funds are disbursed.
- Approximate numbers:
 - PhD: ~11 eligible in-state students.
 - MSCSS: ~30–39 depending on whether new admits are included.
- Committee agreed to open nominations first and then decide whether to split funds across winter and spring based on the volume and strength of nominees.

Actions:

- All Faculty:
 - Nominate eligible students using the Graduate Merit nomination form by Nov 30.
- Rachel:
 - Share the nomination form link and verify in-state status and enrollment for nominees (including students returning from leave).
 - Submit final nominations to Financial Aid by Dec 1.
- Wes & Rachel:
 - After reviewing nominations, decide whether to split funds between winter and spring or disburse in one round.

12. PhD Applications & Recruitment Workflow

- PhD applications for Fall 2026 are open. Wes asked faculty how they are experiencing contacts from prospective students.

- Ankur reported receiving 2–3 emails per week (mostly international, often generic), forwarding promising ones to Rachel or Anisha.
- Ideas & Concerns
 - Eyhab: Suggested a lightweight pre-screening step so strong candidates can share materials in one place and interested faculty can browse them.
 - Rachel: Clarified that the Graduate School will not support a no-fee “pre-application” in the official system this cycle.
- Mohamed & Ankur:
 - Expressed concern that creating anything that looks like a parallel application system or that collects transcripts/CVs in an “application-like” form.
 - Emphasized that the process must clearly remain informal; faculty should retain full discretion to respond or ignore direct emails.
- Consensus approaches
 - **PhD Recruitment Email Alias**
 - Create a shared email alias (managed by Rachel and Anisha) to:
 - Receive informal inquiries from prospective students.
 - Route promising cases to appropriate faculty.
 - Clearly describe this as an informal recruitment contact, not an official application channel.
 - **Website and Faculty Page Language**
 - Update the PhD recruitment website to:
 - Encourage students to email the recruitment alias for help matching with potential advisors.
 - Still allow direct contact with faculty, but set expectations.
 - Ankur will draft a short text snippet faculty can paste into their personal webpages, pointing students to the recruitment alias.
- Rachel confirmed:
 - Priority PhD application deadline is in February; a final deadline is typically in July.
 - If a faculty member already knows and endorses a strong candidate, it is fine for the student to apply early.
- Donald suggested faculty forward mis-matched but promising inquiries to colleagues or the grad-faculty list so strong applicants aren’t lost.
- Wes emphasized copying Rachel and Anisha on such emails to improve tracking and coordination.
- Deadlines: In response to Wei Cai’s question, Rachel clarified that the priority PhD application deadline is in February, with a final deadline usually in July.
 - For strong candidates already known to faculty, the advice was to apply earlier rather than waiting solely for a conference result to appear on the CV.
- **Actions:**
 - Rachel & Anisha:
 - Create and monitor a PhD recruitment email alias.
 - Wes, Rachel, Anisha:
 - Update the PhD recruitment website to introduce the alias and clarify its informal role.
 - Ankur:
 - Draft a brief snippet that faculty can add to their webpages directing prospective students to the alias.
 - All Faculty:
 - Forward promising prospective-student inquiries to the alias or relevant colleagues as appropriate.

Next Meeting

- Date: December 5, 2025

Action Items Recap

Wes J. Lloyd

- Raise the tuition-exemption course listing issue at the SET-wide meeting on November 21, encouraging other units to submit their course lists.
- Work with Rachel, Wei Cheng, and Kira to update the 4+1 planning grid for a Fall 2026 launch, aligned with course scheduling.
- Meet with undergraduate CS advisors to brief them on the 4+1 program and updated planning grid.
- Secure 1–2 additional faculty to help organize and participate in the December 5 PhD student seminar (or postpone to winter if needed).
- Prepare chair's statements for Xutong Li and Chris Marriott for the November 21 full faculty meeting.

Rachel Crook

- Continue revising MSCSS and PhD handbooks, aiming for approval at the next meeting.
- Monitor the registrar's response on the expanded TCSS 510–599 tuition-exemption course list.
- Process Graduate Merit Scholarship nominations and submit the final list to Financial Aid by December 1 for winter and spring disbursement.
- Collaborate with Wes, Wei Cheng, and Kira to update the 4+1 planning grid.
- Work with Anisha to create and manage a PhD recruitment email alias.
- Assist with updating the PhD recruitment website language to incorporate the new alias and expectations.

Juhua Hu

- Share the three PNOIs (two certificates and the MS AIFA program) with faculty by the end of November for feedback.
- Incorporate faculty feedback and submit the PNOIs in early December.

Wei Cheng & Kira King

- Work with Wes and Rachel to refine the 4+1 planning grid, ensuring it aligns with actual course offerings and the 12-credit double-counting policy.

Ankur Teredesai

- Prepare a ~10-minute update for a future meeting on the TCSS 598 seminar overhaul.
- Draft a short snippet faculty can place on their webpages, directing prospective PhD students to the recruitment email alias.

Anisha Joshi

- Visit upper-division undergraduate classes (400-level and relevant core courses) to promote the 4+1 program and graduate applications once the planning grid and messaging are finalized.
- Collaborate with Rachel to set up and monitor the PhD recruitment email alias.

All Faculty

- Review the October 3, 2025 minutes in advance of the next meeting for discussion and formal vote.
- Continue reviewing and commenting on MSCSS and PhD handbook drafts.
- Nominate eligible students for UWT Graduate Merit Scholarships by November 30 using the nomination form.
- Encourage PhD students to respond to the survey and attend the December 5 PhD seminar.
- Forward promising PhD inquiries to the recruitment alias or relevant colleagues to support coordinated recruitment.