

Spring 2006 CIS Board Of Advisors Meeting Minutes

April 29, 2006

Members in attendance:

Tim Fossum, CIS Department Chair
Jim Cottrell, CIS Advisory Board Chair
James Jones, CIS Advisory Board Secretary
Adam Myatt
Lynne Kemp
Dana Harris
Ronda Curtis
Haden Land
Rob Gray
Jeff Crump, CIS Advisory Board Vice Chair
Dan Wall
Gary Wager
Justin Sipher
Jeff McGrath
Andy Harradine

Students in attendance:

Tim Mann, ACM President and CIS Board Member
Thomas Hiller
Peter Bean
Jamie Sinclair
Jeff Snow
Nelson Gideon
Michael McKensie
Zach Deacon
Several other students attended for portions of the meeting.

Faculty in attendance:

Susan Haller
Charlie Marshall

Administration and staff in attendance:

Dr. Steven Marqusee (Assistant Dean)

James Cottrell opened the meeting by introducing Steve ??

Dr. Steve Marqusee's Opening Remarks

- Indicated optimism for the CIS dept on behalf of the administration.
- Indicated that they are close to signing a great new CIS professor.
- Discussed the administrations protocol of rewarding depts. that bring in students.
- Quick overview of the happenings on campus this weekend (foundation board meeting, classroom dedication, and high school visitors)

Jim Cottrell Hails and Farewells

Jim announced 3 new board members: Leslie Williams, **Karen Schuh**, and **Mike Zebulske**

A brief introduction by each Board attendee was made.

Tim Mann, ACM Report

ACM's Vice Chair left Potsdam to attend Syracuse University.

ACM's 2006 Spring goals were achieved by:

- gain new members using CSTEP (4 were added)
- has become better known through tutoring programs
- attended the CCSCNE programming contest with 8 students with improved results compared to last time.
- Nominations for next year's executive board happening in the next week.
- Meetings are approx. every 2 weeks – usually the same 5 students or so attend.
- Tim Fossum mentioned that Potsdam might be a possible site for Fall 2006 programming contest.

Capstone Projects Presentations

Timothy Mann & Peter Bean: Structural Analysis and Design

- Goal was to develop app to serve mid-range market of structural design.
- Tim and Peter presented an overview of their project with some of the difficulties encountered.
- A discussion ensued regarding the process of setting out to define this project in terms of how the requirements were gathered, development, testing, and scheduling.
- Dr. Fossum brought up the issue of how to disseminate a project such as this and that the dept. is available to support them.
- Total amount of time on this project: approx. 70 person hours.

Thomas Hiller: Computer Forensics

- Used by law enforcement to analysis computer systems for evidence at a trial.
- A presentation of many of the aspects of filesystems, software tools, and techniques to discover and manipulate computer systems was given.

Greg Kuchyt: Intelligence Package Management for RPM

- RPM is the Unix-based package management system (installer with dependencies).
- Greg developed a new facility called 'tach', which is an enhancement to the RPM layer.

Zach Fadika: Room Scheduling Application

- a Linux based web application to organize room use.
- 2300 lines of code.

All the presenters were asked various design and technical questions concerning their projects and all were congratulated by the board members.

Dr. Fossum: Chair's Report

Activities by staff:

- Completed visits to community colleges to Syracuse / Rochester occurred in November to work on setting up articulation? relationships
- Attended NSF panel forum in DC in December, March, April for grant development
- Alumni visits in upstate NY / Raleigh / Wilmington NC in January
- Bioinformatics colloquium was held in March with Canisius College
- Science Olympiad was held here in March
- CCSF-NE was held in Worcester MA (programming contest)

An overview of all CIS faculty memberships in on-campus organizations was provided. There are now 35 CIS majors enrolled as of this semester. There are 10 minors.

New faculty recruitment:

- 140 applicants
- 10 invited for phone interview
- 3 on-campus interviews held
- An offer has been made to Prof. Panja and is now being negotiated

An overview of the proposed course offerings for Fall 2006 was presented. Future projects:

- Summer student research project: robot device drivers for intelli-bot
- Prof. Haller to be a conference chair for the SIGCSE (premier CS education conference) in Cincinnati
- CCSC-NE conference to be co-hosted with Plattsburgh in 2009
- North Country Programming Contest in November 2006
- Continue to push for new Arts & Technology building
- Continue to visit community colleges

CIS Program Redesign: Dr. Fossum presents his proposals to change the program

Note: Please refer to the documents 'Proposed Changes to the BA in Computer and Information Sciences – SUNY Potsdam – March 2006' with 'Appendix: Summary of course changes' for more details on this proposal. The pdf file containing these documents is: "CIS Spring 2006 Proposed Changes.pdf".

A questionnaire was sent out to various on-campus entities regarding the impact of re-organizing the curriculum towards a more 'industry-standard' format for reasons including making inbound transfers easier. Things that make the Potsdam CIS department different include: the capstone experience and mentoring.

Regarding the name of the department, Dr. Fossum completed an analysis of other SUNY CS programs. Dr. Fossum feels that it is advantageous for students to have the CS label vs. CIS.

Current students favor moving towards that name as well. In terms of required credit hours, the Potsdam CIS degree is more or less equal to other SUNY colleges who offer BS degrees. Regarding course names, a similar survey was completed.

The board and faculty had a good discussion regarding whether its better to standardize or remain different from the ‘industry-standard’. Being ‘standard’ makes it easier to attract transfer students vs. being unique may be more attractive to non-transfer students. The point was made by current students that the area for differentiation in the program should be in the elective courses that are available – which was agreed to by all. An in-depth discussion of the proposed realignment of the curriculum was completed, which much discussion amongst the board and faculty on a course-by-course basis. Among the courses that generated lots of discussion, CIS 356 Computer Architecture (Assembly Language) brought up many pro and con points. It was generally agreed by all present that assembly language needs to be in the curriculum as it is very fundamental to understanding programming.

Dr. Fossum presented a final synopsis of the proposal for required courses. Ethics, Software Engineering, the Capstone, and Computer Networks are requirements that will be differentiating factors for this program. There will be 2 CIS elective courses as a part of the core requirements. The core will remain at 40 credit hours and the Capstone Experience will remain (or as an alternative an Internship). Regarding new elective courses, ideas were raised such as distributed computing, clustering, and cryptography.

Regarding Accreditation, Dr. Fossum indicated that he does not feel that accreditation is a viable option for the BA program, due to campus limits on hours in-major. For marketing purposes, he also thinks its not that important. Also, to be accredited, the department needs to have 5 full-time faculty members, which is probably not a near term likelihood. In short, accreditation should not be a driving force.

Dr. Fossum stated that the primary goal now is to stabilize the department and make is most attractive for new students. The number of non CIS required electives are being cut from 4 to 2 in order to be more competitive with other programs.

Dr. Fossum then asked the board for any final comments and for approval of these proposed changes. He does want to change the name to “Computer Science” but that is being delayed for the time being as that is an off-campus decision.

Dr. Fossum would like the next board meeting to coincide with an open house in the fall. That date will be determined in the near future.

Board Meeting was adjourned.

Saturday night dinner at Sergis

Most board members, CIS faculty, and a group of about 10 students had a very nice dinner in the Sergi’s Ballroom. Following that, many board members headed over to Maxfields for beers and socializing on a warm and sunny April evening.

Post-Meeting News: On May 17 Gary Wager reported that his company, Tech Valley Networking, had hired Potsdam CIS student Tom Hiller as a programmer.