Curriculum Committee
Minutes

April 7, 2008

Attendees: Tom Doeppner, Steve Reiss, John Savage (Chair), Warren Schudy
Absent: John Hughes, Anna Lysyanskaya
Guest: Roberto Tamassia

1. PhD Requirements

We resumed the discussion of PhD requirements of November 29, December 6, February 25, March 10, and March 17, amending the rules drafted at the last meeting slightly.

We confirmed that every PhD graduate should a) leave with knowledge of substantial portion of computer science, b) have a broad knowledge of his/her area of expertise (the thesis area), c) have knowledge of several related areas, and d) complete a Ph.D. thesis.

To meet these goals we tentatively agreed upon the following requirements:

(a) Eight computer science courses in the first two years in residence other than reading and research courses. The courses are subject to the approval of the graduate advisor.

(b) Six courses must be at the 2000 level. They must include at least one course in four of the five areas shown in Table 1.

(c) A two-course major in the thesis area within the department.

(d) Two two-course minors, one complementing the thesis area within the department and one outside the department.

(e) The current programming comprehensive examination.

(f) The current research requirement.
2. Proposed PhD in Computational Biology and Computer Science

The committee met with Roberto Tamassia to discuss an amended version of this proposed degree program. CCMB has made the following changes in the original version (taken from Roberto’s memo):

1. Name: Three new PhD programs will be introduced, one for each home department. In particular, there will be a PhD program in “Computational Biology and Computer Science” (CBCS). The requirements for the CBCS PhD program will be decided by CCMB in consultation with the Department of Computer Science.

2. Core requirements (Table 2): Remove CS 15 and 16; add CS 157.

3. Course requirements (Section C):
   a. For the CBCS degree, the two courses selected in consultation with the advisor must be graduate-level courses in computer science, outside of computational biology, and selected from a list of pre-approved courses.
   b. New special-topics CS courses taught by CCMB/CS faculty members will be introduced that correspond to the rotations taken in the CS department.
c. The paragraph “Students will also be expected ... comparable ... home department.” will be removed.
d. CS courses should cover at least three different areas
e. Add rule that at least six courses must be 200-level.

4. Further requirements (Section D):
   a. For the CBCS degree, the “preliminary research presentation” follows the same rules as the “research comp”.
   b. For the CBCS degree, students must pass the programming comps.
   c. Students must attend most (90%) of the CCMB colloquia and 25% of the home department colloquia

The committee approved these changes and raised the following other issues:

(a) Would students admitted to this degree program be able to move to our standard departmental Ph.D. program without prior approval? Roberto said that they would not be able to make the move without being admitted to our standard program.

(b) It was said that this degree program should not be based on special topics courses. That is, these courses should be converted to regular courses. Roberto agreed but would like our approval to be conditional on this conversion, to which we agreed.

(c) The question was asked who decides on admission to candidacy. Roberto’s answer was that it would be the responsibility of a CCMB committee. He also expects the director of graduate studies for this PhD program to be a CS faculty member who is in CCMB.

(d) The following phrase appears at the end of the first paragraph under B. Advising on page 5 of the proposal.
   “The committee will determine which part of this training, if any, can be undertaken for graduate credit.”
   This phrase will be replaced by “Students may receive graduate credit for such courses when such credit is offered.”

(e) Under item C. Course Requirements it was agreed that the requirement that “At least six 200-level courses must be completed” would be amended to read “At least six computer science 200-level courses other than reading and research courses must be completed.”
(f) The second paragraph in C. Course Requirements gives the impression that Bio 50 is an approved “graduate biology” course, which the proposers may wish to change.

(g) In the paragraph on page 7 beginning “After admission to candidacy” “no earlier” is to be replaced by “at least”.

(h) Section 5. FINANCIAL ISSUES is to be deleted.

Submitted by
John E. Savage