

**CAPP Report to the Faculty Senate on
Progress Made in Fulfilling the Terms of the
Agreement Presented to the Faculty Senate by
Vice Provost Garza on 10 May 2000**

(6 March 2002)

Abstract

This document is the report of the Committee on Academic Programs and Policies pertaining to the progress that has been made to implement the terms of the agreement negotiated by Vice Provost Cutberto Garza and announced to the Senate on 10 May 2000. We begin with a review of the background that led to the need for this agreement, continue with a summary of key elements of the agreement, and review the progress made towards implementation. A key element that is still unfulfilled is the development of a plan to guide the re-installation of the Department of Computer Science into one or more of the existing colleges. We are concerned by evidence of a lack of commitment by the Provost to carry out the terms of this agreement, and we close with several questions for the Provost.

I. Brief Background to the Agreement

In June 1999 a preliminary Task Force Report *Cornell in the Information Age* was issued that addressed the need for computational thinking and the availability of computational resources across Cornell. This document identified a central role for the Computer Science Department (CSD) in promoting this thinking. On 19 August 1999, in response to rumors and after requests that Provost Randel clarify matters, the Provost issued a memorandum, "Computing and Information Sciences." This memorandum informed the Cornell community that the Provost has appointed

"...[Robert Constable] to the position of Dean for Computing and Information Sciences....The charge to him and the task force is to identify how computing and information sciences can best be advanced throughout the University; it is not to invent, on whatever pretext, the way to do nothing.

Secondly, I have asked Dean Constable to work with Vice President Carolyn Ainslie and Vice Provost Cutberto Garza to develop pilot management procedures for the new Office of the Dean for CIS. I have asked that these pilot procedures encompass administrative responsibilities for the present Department of Computer Science....In the meantime the Department of CS remains a department of the College of Engineering and the College of Arts and Sciences,...In order to ensure that, as new resources are committed, these resources constitute neither a drag on the College of Engineering nor an indirect subsidy for others of its programs, the Office of the Provost has assumed responsibility for the oversight of the Department's finances."

The removal of the Computer Science Department (CSD), by Provost Randel, from the administrative control of the Engineering College and therefore from the administrative control of any college, occurred in the Summer of 1999. This action was taken against the expressed wishes of the Dean of Engineering and of the other department heads in the College. On 24 May 1999 the heads expressed themselves presciently as follows:

“The creation of an autonomous unit, as suggested in the presentation, in our view would have significant adverse impact on the College of Engineering’s reputation and, ultimately, upon the reputation of the University....Without consideration of these issues, the report could be seriously divisive.”

Many of the issues raised by this unprecedented administrative action and by the Task Force Report of June provoked strong debate for much of the 1999-2000 academic year.

The Senate met to discuss the implications at its September, October, December, and February meetings. The December meeting contained a discussion of the now completed final report of the Task Force.

Vice Provost Garza worked diligently to complete his assigned task of developing management procedures, and in this he consulted frequently with Dean Constable, Dean Hopcroft of Engineering, Dean Lewis of Arts and Sciences, Dean Cooke and with CAPP and its chair Prof. Fine. After about a dozen revisions, Garza presented a draft to the Senate at its 7 February 2000 meeting that was entitled, “Faculty and Office for Computing and Information Science: Administrative and Management Structure”, and he solicited reactions.

On 10 May 2000, Vice Provost C. Garza announced to the Senate that, “I’m pleased to say that the President and Provost have agreed to pursue the proposal that I presented to the Senate in February.” The document that was approved was unchanged from the draft of 7 February that had been presented for information and discussion by Vice Provost Garza to the Senate at its 7 February meeting.

II. Elements of the Agreement

“The Faculty of Computing and Information Science (FCIS) is used to designate a defined university-wide faculty body responsible for advising the university regarding the enhancement of teaching, research, and outreach related to the computing and information sciences and assuring the cohesive development of this area across the university...The position of Dean of Computing and Information Science (CIS) was created to move the University’s Computing and Information Science initiative forward in a timely and organized way.”

There was created an Office of Computing and Information Science (OCIS), administered by the Dean of CIS. The Dean of CIS was to, “Direct the OCIS and FCIS subject to the policy guidance of an Executive Board.”

“The initial charge to the FCIS will be the development of a five year academic plan...”

The Computer Science Department will be located in one or more of the existing colleges based on the recommendations of the 5 year academic plan.”

“The authority to make primary professorial appointments is reserved to the deans of the university’s colleges. The Dean of CIS, however, will appoint search, promotion, and tenure committees jointly with the dean of the candidate’s home college for all proposed or current members of the FCIS. Appointment, tenure, and promotion recommendations will be made according to University policies that apply to the candidate’s home department and college.”

It was made abundantly clear that the FCIS and OCIS did not constitute a college.

A pdf version of the complete agreement is attached to this report.

III. Implementation History

By May 2000 an initial group of 18 faculty was selected to form the nucleus of the FCIS under the leadership of Dean Constable. This group has met regularly since 28 June 2000 to promote the hiring of individuals, the development of majors/minors/concentrations, and encourage the spread of computational thinking and methods in research, scholarship, and undergraduate education across Cornell. The FCIS has had success in attracting excellent faculty to Cornell and in supporting the creation of such undergraduate programs as the one in Computational Biology and in developing plans for one in Information Science. It initiated development of the required five year plan but was careful not to address the issue of the eventual location of the CSD. As of 5 March 2002, there has been no growth in the membership of the FCIS.

The process of formation of an FCI Executive Board was not followed, although in some respects the small FCI acts as the Executive Board.

The most troubling issue has been the failure to address the location of the CSD in “one or more of the existing colleges.” During this time the CSD has made several grants of tenure and numerous faculty tenure-track appointments. Former Dean of Engineering John Hopcroft asserts that there was no Engineering involvement in hiring and promotion in CS, nor in any other administrative matter in the period Fall 1999 through 30 June 2001. Interim Dean of Engineering Harold Craighead reports that this absence of involvement with CS hiring and promotion has persisted to date. There does not appear to have been significant involvement on the part of Arts and Sciences. The anomalous administration and location of CS has been raised several times with Provost Martin, particularly as it impacted the search for a new Dean of Engineering that commenced in mid-2000. However, Provost Martin declared a moratorium on discussions of the location of the CSD and stated that it would not be a matter for discussion with the dean candidates invited in 2000-2001. Provost Martin was reminded of this matter as recently as the UFC meeting of 19 February 2002. At that meeting the Provost said that she was not bound by this agreement, a position that she had advanced on an earlier occasion. Upon being challenged on that position and being shown the sentence quoted above on the eventual disposition of the CSD, the Provost suggested that the sentence was consistent with the way matters stood at the present. She then offered that further discussion on this topic await the outcome of the current search for a new dean of Engineering.

That this issue is of ongoing concern to the Engineering College is evidenced by the following email of 18 February 2002 from Interim Dean Harold Craighead to the chair of CAPP:

“I believe a strong Computer Science department is vital to a modern and highly ranked engineering college and university. Leaving the CS Department in its current unusual and ambiguous position does not seem ideal for the long term health of the department. The Engineering College is ready to work toward locating the Computer Science Department in one or more colleges. The mechanism for implementing this is, however, not clear to me.”

Dean Craighead and department chairs in Engineering have had several meetings with CIS Dean R. Constable and Chair C. Van Loan that failed to reach agreement on such a mechanism. Dean Craighead’s sentiments are supported by an email of 4 March 2002 from Dean Phillip Lewis of Arts and Sciences which says:

“I do think it would be desirable for the senate to use the Garza agreement as a basis for seeking clarification about the future of CS. While I have my own reasons for wanting to know where we are heading on this front, I think the concerns that really matter and take precedence are those that originate in the faculty of the Engineering college. My interest has of course been rekindled and greatly reinforced by my contacts with Engineering faculty while serving on the dean’s search committee. What I’ve observed is a strong sense on the part of faculty in many departments that the eccentric status of CS causes problems for the college as a whole. Just how true this really is is clearly subject to debate, but since persisting ambiguity makes it hard to develop consensus and move ahead, it’s not a debate that should be deferred. In addition, since I was a party to the agreement worked out by Bert Garza and spent long hours in meetings in his office, I’d like to see the agreement respected.”

IV. Questions for the Provost

1. What is the status of the FCI-generated 5 year academic plan agreed to in the Garza agreement?
2. What are its recommendations or implications for the location of the CS department in one or more colleges?
3. How have tenure-track appointments and promotions been made in the CS department and the FCI?
4. What is the rationale for delaying implementation pending the selection of a new dean of Engineering?