



COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES

iSchool Assembly Minutes

Date: Friday, April 7, 2023 – 9:30 to 11:00 am

Location: virtual

AGENDA

Preliminaries

- Call to order

Quorum recognized.

- Review and approval of minutes from March

Minutes approved without correction.

- Review and approval of this agenda

Agenda approved without correction.

Assembly Items

- Dean's Update [Keith]

Announcements

We were #1 in our category for Giving Day.

Hernisa Kacorri has earned tenure.

We completed the accessibility hire—Stephanie Valencia (CMU).

We are working on the GVPT paired hire; a candidate will arrive for a second visit.

The process for the data visualization hire continues.

The external review was positive. The reviewers did *not* support departmentalization at this point. They noted that, while there are sufficient resources, there remains a lack of certainty about availability. We also lack contiguous space.

The dean is working on the response to this.

For instance, the review includes, “The additional work generated by rapid growth exceeds the capacity of the existing systems,” and “more time is spent keeping track of transactions than on getting the work done.”

The dean’s response:

We have been operating like a startup since 2017. Thus, from 2017-2019, we were venture capital funded; from 2020-2022, we experienced growth; and, from 2023 we have pursued establishment. We have seen some stresses of maintaining a startup culture.

It’s clear that we must be “more regular” about what we do. COVID and the resulting uncertainty about establishing a “new normal” have contributed to difficulties as well. There will be continued conversations with the Provost.

In order to focus on our own processes and initiatives, Dean’s commissions have been established.

Some issues to be covered are teaching modality, particularly to ensure that students can take classes in-person if desired; the future of the Information Challenge Initiative; the next stage of and future investment in the iConsultancy; reducing the transaction costs for Events, as we try to become more regular; filling the Associate Dean of DEI position, particularly its faculty or staff placement; and serving undergraduate students, especially first-generation students.

The lack of contiguous space remains corrosive to lab structure, because PhD students cannot be immediately outside a faculty member’s door. It hurts our “brand” and cheapens the experiences of our students. Further, the “presence” of the college is weakened by being in Patuxent and AC Williams (as emergency space), as well as Hornbake South. The message it sends, especially in the absence of signage, is that we are not at the same level as other similarly sized colleges. We have students who use the iSchool Commons, but many of those students are biological sciences majors, and the problem with getting iSchool students to study there is classroom assignment.

This is being worked on with the Provost.

Commencement

Commencement is coming up: Monday, 22, 4-6p, at the Xfinity Center. The main University commencement is from 6:30 to 8:30pm at SECU stadium. There is only 30 minutes in between. We would like 4-5 TTK and 4-5 PTK volunteers to attend the University commencement (we have 2 PTK already). Only 12 faculty members in total attended last year’s University Commencement. We need more faculty there; the Provost would like 10%.

We will have a golf cart.

During today’s staff meeting, exercises will be performed so the different units can get to know one another better. During APT, the TTK workload policy draft will be covered.

Q&A: [Q] Will the student experiences dean’s commission include advisor and student members? [A] Yes.

[Q] Is there anywhere that new faculty can find out how commencement works? [A] Sarah will send out emails and will present later today.

As for the time of university commencement, the Dean passed out last year in the warm weather, so there isn't a great time, as weather-related health concerns need to be balanced with faculty members' availability for their families.

- Maryland Day [Sarah]

Maryland Day will occur on April 29th, 10-3pm. Volunteers will serve from 8am-5:30pm in shifts. This will happen on Hornbake Plaza.

If you are busy that day, there are slots to volunteer beforehand for book organizing for the Little Free Library. We've had an "explosion" of donations of books. You can still bring books to 0300 Hornbake or Patuxent 2102.

We'll have a prize wheel. If the weather is good, we expect more visitors than last year. Besides the prize wheel, there will be simple coding games, info about our programs, and decoding activities.

We can sign a form for high school service hours.

The major commencement update will be during the next assembly, as information was just given to Sarah Grun on Monday. She is working on revising logistics to shorten the ceremony. Staff volunteers need to attend a walk-through on Friday 5/19 at 11:30. Helpers need to arrive at 2pm, faculty and graduates must arrive at 3.

The coveted driver position for the golf cart to the University Commencement has been taken. On a more positive note, the golf cart has off-road capabilities.

Last year, ours was the earliest ceremony. Please make sure you plan for parking.

Direct questions to ischoolevents@umd.edu. We are currently *not* ticketing guests. Students must complete the RSVP form indicating how many guests they plan to bring, though. The deadline was 3/31. We have had many regalia requests. Sarah is working on that.

Volunteers get a Maryland day t-shirt and an exclusive iSchool swag item.

[Q] One of our clients in the Capstone Project is a hotdog vendor. Can we invite them to sell hot dogs and give donations? [A] Food requests had to be in by early February. Potentially next year?

[NB] The distance between iSchool commencement and University commencement is potentially walkable. Keep in mind that traffic will be congested, so walking may be preferable. It is, on average, a 15-minute walk on a nice day. It will be a rush for our students and their families. We will advocate hard next year not to be in this position. Shortening our ceremony "doesn't seem fair to our graduates."

- Nominating Committee [Fabian]

The nominating committee is Renee Hill, Katie Shilton, and Fabian himself.

Fabian wants to be replaced.

Jeff Waters is also on the nominating committee.

Announcements

Professors with students in distress should contact the relevant director of graduate or undergraduate operations.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. Accepted.