



Master of Information Student Council
University of Toronto, Faculty of Information
misc.ischool.utoronto.ca | misc.ischool@utoronto.ca

Claude Bissell Building, 7th Floor, Student Lounge
December 9th, 2014 at 4:00-6:00pm

MISC Meeting

Minutes

Present: Hilary Barlow, Chris Hogendoorn, Jessie Wionzek, Julia King, Leah Strudwick, Catherine Lamoureaux, Lilly Rigling, Karen Lees, Calvin Tennakoon, Maya Cruz, Hannah Saunders, Stephanie Abba, Amanda Chernawski, Haleigh Fox, Mari Vihuri, Carolyn Dineen

Regrets: Diana Kulpa

Absent: Lucy Szczesniak, Mehreen Athar, Akash Venkat, Junoh Kim, Nuree Lee, Janel Cheng, Katrina Cohen-Palacios, Peymon Montazeri

1. Approval of the agenda

- a. Second: Jessie, passed unanimously

2. Reading and approval of the minutes

- a. Motion to approve the [minutes](#) from the 11 November meeting.
 - i. Second: Leah, passed unanimously

3. Business arising from the minutes

4. Reports by Executives:

a. President (Hilary Barlow)

- i. The CFS referendum took place from 24-28 November and MISC put out a full effort to raise awareness about the issues it raised and to get out the student vote. We were the first course union to endorse the No Campaign and one of only two to endorse at all (the other being the Anthropology

Graduate Students' Union). Most if not all of the other graduate course unions didn't endorse either campaign. A huge thank you to everyone who talked to classes, talked to your friends, or accompanied students to the polls!

- ii. The CRO (who is from CFS) contends that the referendum missed quorum by 7 votes. The GSU Litigation Committee and No Campaign argued at the 1 December UTGSU AGM that there were irregularities in the results that should be investigated. A motion passed at the AGM to continue the Litigation Committee for another year and investigate the results (see GSU report for more details).
- iii. MISC's annual mental health event will be in early February. No need to make decisions now, but think about if you'd like to be involved in planning and hosting it. Also think of ways we can increase participation (puppies?).
- iv. Hilary attended a whole bunch of committee meetings to push Inforum issues and the conclusions of the IPS Specialization survey. See committee reports for more details.

b. Vice President (Chris Hogendoorn)

- i. Chris had an idea to investigate a unique colour for MI graduation gowns, since we currently share the pink colour with the Masters of Arts & Sciences.
- ii. Chris suggested a button slogan: "I'm the Librarian."

c. Secretary (Jessie Wionzek)

d. Treasurer (Lucy Szczesniak)

e. Webmaster (Mari Vihuri)

5. Reports by Committee Chairs:

a. Academic Affairs (Carolyn Dineen)

- i. Collecting class rep reports for the Fall 2014. Can be viewed in [MISConnect](#).

b. Professional Development (Jessie Wionzek & Julia King)

i. 9th Annual Employer Showcase

- 1. We'll be holding our annual Employer Showcase on January 9th, 2015, from 2-4pm, in the Inforum. This is a great opportunity to network and meet potential employers. There will be food & drinks! Signage

will go up within the next week or so. Tell your friends! See <http://misc.ischool.utoronto.ca/pd-employershowcase> for more information.

2. **Volunteers needed** to assist with employer/student registration, nametags, etc! Time commitment: approx. 30 minutes to 1 hour (will be done in shifts) between 1-5pm. For more details and to sign up, please email pd.ischool@utoronto.ca or talk to Jessie.

c. Social (Leah Strudwick & Hannah Saunders)

d. Merchandise (Mehreen Athar)

6. Reports by Representatives:

a. Alumni Association (Catherine Lamoureux)

- i. There will be a consultation meeting before the Inforum renovations begin
- ii. Kathleen O'Brien is in talks with someone re: working on the iSchool website

b. MISC-MUSSA Liaison (Haleigh Fox)

- i. Haleigh noted that there's been some interest in having more art in the lobby/lounge. She'll keep us posted.

c. Admissions Committee (Karen Lees)

- i. After Hilary, Diana and Calvin agreed to pursue Admissions Committee as a venue to change the IPS Specialization website, Hilary emailed Siobhan Stevenson (who is Chair of AdCom) to inquire about attending the next meeting and if the website would fall under the purview of AdCom. Stevenson was fine with it and Hilary attended a 4 December meeting of AdCom with Karen.
- ii. Hilary summarized conclusions from Diana's report and emphasized that the webpage describing the IPS Specialization on the current students part of the iSchool website was one of the sources of information most often consulted by respondents to Diana's survey. Based on this, MISC recommended that the webpage be taken down until a better version of the Specialization is developed (Nadia Caidi mentioned the idea of making it a collaborative program at the 28 November FC meeting). Adriana rejected this out of hand.
- iii. In response to the finding that students found ECE course difficult to impossible to complete, Adriana said the requirement of taking that ECE

course is posted on the website and that SGS is willing to put on the website that the program is under review. Hilary countered that it's a particular background within the ECE field that is needed and in many cases a bachelor's in computer science would not be sufficient.

- iv. Adriana mentioned that accommodations are made for students so that they can complete the Specialization. Hilary asked if the iSchool assesses whether students have the background to complete IPS before they are admitted. Adriana said that since IPS is not a concentration or a collaborative program, students don't indicate that in their application (and 80% of students don't end up doing in their first semester what they mention in their application statements, anyway). For clarification, Hilary asked if they appear as general program applicants and Adriana said that was basically accurate.
- v. Hilary asked if recommended IPS courses are evaluated for their inclusion as IPS-related courses on the website, Adriana said yes and referred to INF1341 being removed from it. Hilary asked if the website mentions that accommodations may have to be made for student to complete the degree, and Adriana said that not everything can be on the website; students can talk to graduate coordinator.
- vi. Stevenson recommended that students can use independent study, reading courses or a thesis option to do more work on IPS concepts if they are so inclined.
- vii. Karen noted that she will be unable to attend the meetings next semester due to a class overlapping with the meeting times. She asked if anyone would be able to take her place/represent her at the meetings.
 - 1. Chris noted that he could do the April 2nd meeting.

d. Faculty Council (Hilary Barlow et al.)

- i. Diana presented her report on the IPS Specialization program issues to the 28 November FC meeting. Some professors were defensive but it obviously made an impression. Dean Ross suggest that ECE is the more dominant partner with the IPS Specialization and said that he would bring it up with them. Wendy Duff suggested that MISC bring the issue to Programs Committee, and Hilary said that we would do just that. After the meeting Hilary, Diana and Calvin discussed plans to bring the issue to both the Programs and Admissions Committees.

- ii. The UTL/Inforum report was discussed and Dean Ross said the report would be released that evening (28 November). Hilary said she would read it and distribute it to MISC members and that it would be discussed at the 9 December meeting. Dean Ross said he was fine with the idea of a “town hall” event but preferred the term of “focus groups” and also said he would like to solicit feedback via email. The report has yet to be released. Hilary sent an email to Dean Ross inquiring about the report on 5 December.

- iii. **(Diana) Follow up Issues Re: Identity, Privacy, and Security (IPS) Specialization:**
 - 1. For **Programs Committee** and **Admissions Committee**: At future meetings, please continue to follow up on two subjects. **First, between now and the implementation of a Collaborative IPS program:** What is the status of the existing IPS specialization website? Have all INF recommended courses been evaluated to determine their direct relevance to IPS and therefore their presence on the IPS list? Does the website accurately reflect the accommodations that future and current students will need if they are unable to complete the program as outlined? Discuss the option of taking down the IPS specialization website until the collaborative program goes live. **Second, the plans for a new Collaborative IPS program** (primarily an issue for Programs Committee): What progress is being made on the collaborative program? How will the program be developed and maintained to be sure it adds value? What faculties are involved and what specific courses are being considered? Most important for iSchool, what privacy and security courses will the iSchool bring to the table that will add value for our partners? Is the iSchool initiating the development of at least one INF privacy and/or security course from the Faculty of Information perspectives and values? Currently, the following INF course descriptions include the words ‘privacy’ and/or ‘security’: **INF1342H** - System Requirements and Architectural Design, **INF1343H** - Data Modeling and Database Design, **INF2115H** - Data Librarianship, **INF2150H** - Legal Issues in Archives, **INF2165H** - Social Issues in Information and Communication Technologies, **INF2181H** - Information Policy, Regulation, and Law, **INF2241H** - Critical Making: Information Studies, Social Values, and Physical Computing, **JIE1001H** - Seminar in Identity, Privacy, and Security.

- iv. **Stephanie: Part-time Student Working Group Feedback**
 Feedback from part-time students on the MI program/iSchool was requested through the MISC weekly email digest. A good number of the issues raised

were thought by the chairs of the Part-Time Students Working Group (Stephanie A., Christopher H.) to be applicable to all iSchool students and not just part-timers. Issues raised included:

- appreciation expressed for evening course offerings and of events held past 5pm (e.g. the recent associations networking event)
- desire for more online courses for credit
- request for talks (Inforum seminars, Skills workshops, guest speakers, etc.) to be available online for those not able to attend
- pre-requisites offered only once per year (making it difficult for part-time students to get pre-reqs to complete courses in order)
- confusion and frustration over eligibility for GSU health and dental plans (part-time students are eligible for the dental plan, but not the health plan - Christopher H. is following up with GSU on this.)
- request for Inforum to extend evening and weekend hours

Full *preliminary* report appended to this agenda.

e. Graduate Students' Union (Lilly Rigling & Karen Lees)

- i. Results of the referendum: 66% of students who voted were in favour of leaving the CFS. The CFS CRO said that the vote was below quorum by 7 votes. At the UTGSU AGM, the No Campaign and the Litigation Committee argued that there were irregularities in the referendum process that need to be investigated. For example, the only source stating that we missed quorum is the CRO and GSU does not have access to the exact number of graduate students at the time of the vote. It's also unknown if the quorum calculation took into account November graduation. A Litigation Committee member who was also a scrutineer in the referendum said he was not allowed to be in the room where the ballots were held for 20 minutes while the room was "set up."
- ii. A motion was passed at the AGM to continue the Litigation Committee for another year and to investigate the results of the referendum.
- iii. As of 3 December, CFS is suing the GSU to enforce their interpretation of quorum. This is from a [tweet](#) by Brad Evoy of the No Campaign. There aren't any more details on this yet from any other sources.
- iv. A motion also passed to endorse the Black Lives Matter Toronto protest action that took place on 25 November and to donate \$500 to the Hands Up United movement. Additionally, the GSU Race & Ethnicity Caucus will approve a letter to the Ferguson Police Department.

f. Student Tech Fund (Akash Venkat, Junoh Kim & Nuree Lee)

g. Information Services Committee (Janel Cheng)

- i. Hilary attended the 14 November ISC meeting to follow up regarding the issues of the Inforum remodelling and also the decreasing hours. Tony Lemmens presented [this report](#) on IT concerns at the iSchool. Discussion of whether or not Percy Lo will be replaced (at this point it looks like no, Tony says he needs more data). Warranty is currently expired for servers, possibility that the iSchool could be vulnerable if the host fails. Consensus towards the end of the meeting that leasing machines would be a better idea, would spread out costs over multiple years. Lari Langford confirmed that this is something that's done in UTL system.
- ii. Professors McEwen and Keilty emphasized that they were also frustrated by the Inforum hours being cut, and that it has had a negative effect on teaching when professors can't, for example, use the technology resources of the Inforum during evening classes. Professor McEwen said she would bring forward a recommendation to Faculty Council (she did not attend the 28 November FC meeting).
- iii. Lari Langford mentioned the possibility of a "town hall" type of event where students could provide feedback about remodelling the Inforum, possibly in January. Hilary expressed support for this idea.
- iv. Hilary will be travelling home for the holidays during the next ISC meeting (12 December), but Christopher Hogendoorn has said he will attend the meeting and continue pushing these issues.

h. Life and Times Committee (Amanda Chernawski)

- i. The final iTea went really well, with very high attendance.

i. Programs Committee (Catherine Lamoureux & Calvin Tennakoon)

- i. It seems that the faculty is trying very hard to get the co-op program going for next year, and they want to make it open to GPO students as well. Calvin noted that there may be some issues with them rushing this so much. Haleigh asked how it will affect CRO students and Catherine suggested she email Wendy Duff for more information.

1. Haleigh also noted that she's had difficulties doing the CRO program since the beginning, and she especially had trouble getting information from Adriana.
 2. Carolyn asked if there would potentially be a student representative for the co-op program, a la the one Wendy Duff suggested having for the TALint program.
- ii. Catherine noted that some changes have been made to the IPS specialization, eg. changing the ECE course to make it more "feasible", trying to implement mechanisms to track & counsel students more effectively, etc. Calvin noted that he and Catherine were given a list with details on changes made and that input from the students was encouraged on this issue.
- j. Committee on Standing (CoS) (Diana Kulpa)**
- i. No written report
 - ii. November 25, 2014 CoS voted over email on whether or not to approve a proposed Qualifying Examination Committee for a thesis student
 - iii. Next CoS meeting is January 7, 2015

7. New business

8. Adjourn

- a. Seconded by Chris, approved unanimously

Appendix

PRELIMINARY Report of the MISC Part-Time Students Working Group

In an attempt to increase communication and contact with part-time MI students, the Co-Chairs of the MISC Part-Time Students Working Group (Stephanie Abba and Christopher Hogendoorn) invited feedback by email and announced an 'office hour' would be held November 20th, 2014. Announcements were made in the MISC weekly digests of November 12th and November 19th.

No part-time MI students came by specifically to meet the rep at this 'office hour', but the visibility was useful, and casual conversations were had with full-time and part-time students on their way to evening classes, as well as with faculty members, with the Dean, and with the Registrar who passed by during the hour.

Several emails were received with input from part-time students. These have been anonymized and generalized into Suggestions, Concerns, and Praise:

Suggestions

- ▷ Making talks available online either after they've concluded, or live. (grad student, researcher, prof talks, Inforum workshops, etc.)
- ▷ More online ed for credit - students spoke highly of Prof. Wendy Newman's Library Advocacy course online, saying that it was well organized and well designed.
- ▷ Course availability - it was suggested that some required or core courses should be offered in the summer or online to help students fulfill pre-reqs. It was noted that in some cases courses are only offered in one term (that is, never rotated, e.g. INF1005/1006) so it can be difficult to get core/required courses.
- ▷ Issues with course scheduling and prerequisites which are built for FT students - many courses in a concentration rest on one prerequisite that is only offered once a year, so it is difficult to meet the requirements. It's especially difficult if you're doing a double concentration. (e.g. INF1300 LIS Foundations, INF1310 Intro to Reference, and INF1330 Archives Concepts & Issues) are generally offered only in the Fall term).
- ▷ Health plan - part-time students would like to be able to opt-in to the GSU health plan for themselves and their family members.
- ▷ Request for resources for planning a transition from PT to FT (e.g. financial aid implications, timelines for making these decisions, etc.). As well, are FT to PT resources available?

⇒ Hours for evening courses - some would prefer than evening classes start and end earlier (e.g. 5:30/6:00 to 8:30/9:00 instead of 6:30-9:30) though it was recognized that people with longer commutes might not be able to arrive in time.

⇒ Mature students who are not coming straight out of undergrad would appreciate a pre-semester workshop on Blackboard, what it is, how it is accessed and used, etc. (Perhaps an iSkills workshop or a LibGuide would be of use? Or collaboration with CTSI which offers Blackboard Workshops? (http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/about_ctsi/servicesexpertise/ctsi-workshops.htm))

Concerns

⇒ Orientation activities clearly not planned with part-time students in mind; could these activities be explained in advance “so that I could plan time off during the day to attend (or not)”. Other students unable to take time off from full-time jobs for Orientation felt they had missed a lot of information and were not able to get it in any other way.

⇒ Students found that course planning resources are not helpful for PT students.

⇒ Many required courses are not offered at night so part-time students who cannot attend these classes miss out on the prerequisites necessary for other courses.

⇒ Inforum hours make it challenging for PT students to use those resources. Some items are available elsewhere but some items are only available at the Inforum.

⇒ Difficulty connecting to other students and attending social events (e.g. if schedule means arriving late to iTea and other events, or missing them altogether.)

⇒ Part-time Course Load Changes: Although unaffected personally, in terms of changes in the part-time course load one part-time student who started prior to 2014 is “dismayed at the change and the total lack of consideration for part-time students” and suggested that “the iSchool needs to realize that working professionals do not want to spend 5-6 years of their life pursuing a degree, especially when MBAs can be done in 1-2 years. If I was a prospective student, I would never apply to the iSchool for this reason.” (And suggestions from the iSchool to quit one’s job and switch to full-time status part-way through were not appreciated.)

⇒ Communication - so many emails, but people still felt they were not getting the information they needed (e.g. dental plan opt-out, etc.)

⇒ Dental plan - lack of awareness (or lack of communication) of opt-out dates or even that an opt-out option existed. Request for an FAQ with this kind of information.

⇒ Timing of registration and frustration with registration - why is it held at 6am? And why do we need to rush and fight to register for courses, with most courses full within 10 minutes of the window opening? “This speaks to a serious lack of planning (not offering the right courses, or not enough), or oversaturation (too many students).”

⇒ Although noted on the iSchool website that “The MI degree program is not designed to be completed with evening classes only”, some part-time students say they were never told that they would have to attend day classes to complete the degree, and were “always told being a part-time student was not a problem”. Students were frustrated by this, saying that “logic would dictate that the majority of part-time students have day jobs.”

(<http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/options/mi/part-time-status>)

Praise

⇒ The mentor program is great.

⇒ There was appreciation expressed for events held past 5pm (e.g. the recent associations networking event in the Inforum).

⇒ Students were pleased with the variety of associations, events, speakers, conferences, etc. offered through the iSchool or available to iSchool students. “It really enriches my experience and shows the program is not just about academics.”

⇒ Appreciation of the evening courses offerings. (Many students try to take 2 evening courses in a semester or 1 evening + 1 day, reducing time needed off of full-time day work.)

In the course of receiving these emails I did attempt to answer questions where I could, directing people to the relevant sections of the GSU website (re: health/dental plans and opt-outs) and letting people know about the MISC Facebook group and website.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Abba (Faculty Council Rep) and Christopher Hogendoorn (Vice President)

Co-Chairs, MISC Part-Time Students Working Group