BOA Meeting Minute

Time
8:30 am October 25, 2021

Participants:
The meeting has more than 43 participants who are BOA members, faculty, and staff
BOA members
Faculty, and staff
The Chair, Larry Enoch, Jeff Allen, Stephen Lancaster, Stephen Wheeler, Janenne Pryce-Henry, Shawne Miksa, Suliman Hawamdeh, Sarah Ryan, Jodi Philbrick, Tricia Kuon, Barbara Schultz-Jones, Brian O’Connor, Jennifer Moore, Yunfei Du, Ana Cleveland, Lingzi Hong, Heejun Kim, Xin Wang, Oksana Zavalina, Nichole Tyler, Dean Kinshuk

Welcoming Remarks
The Chair introduces herself and welcomes everyone to the BOA meeting

Introduction of Board Members
All BOA members take turns to introduce themselves

State of the Department
The Chair presents the status of the Department, including the facts, success, and challenges of the Department

Facts of the Department
- Growth in the number of students: DS and IS
  - Compared to Fall 2020, Enrollment growth in Fall 2021 is (1665-1427)/1427 = 16.7%
  - Compared to Fall 2019, Enrollment growth in Fall 2020 is (1427-1052)/1052 = 35.6%;
  - Compared to the respective semesters in 2018-2019, Enrollment growth in Fall 2019 is 30%; Spring 2020 is 42%
  - Compared to Fall 2019, Enrollment growth in Fall 2021 is (1665-944)/944 = 76%
- Growth in the number of courses:
  - For regular semesters, we offered more courses at both levels than 2019-2020
- Faculty and staff:
  - 25 new full-time faculty and six full-time staff
- Faculty expertise: shows the interdisciplinary of the Department
- Challenges:
  - To hire adjunct faculty and teaching fellows with a technical background and teaching experience with the current pay rate
- Budget: our budget does not increase over the year

- Financial: The Department received more funds for increased enrollment this semester 2021-2022

- Student scholarship:
  - The Department awarded 22 different scholarships to students in 2020-2021. 84 students received scholarships. All awards were $1000 each, awarded half in Fall 2021 and a half in Spring 2022
  - Endowed graduate fellowship to Graduate students: – Five students received the awards per year

**Successful events**

- Academic Program Review of DIS programs: we got very positive reviews, and we are working to address suggestion
- DIS Open House:
  - Aims to introduce the Department and the Programs to the students. And to provide resources for student success
  - More than 200 participants (270 students registered), but still very limited compared to the number of current students.
- Hiring new faculty members: 4 faculty and 2 staff members
- Orientations held: Instructor orientations (one for each regular semester, August 17th 2021 for Fall 2021). First student employee orientation (August 19, 2021)
- Establishing the Data Science Organization
- Hosting Academic conferences: international school librarianship conference, MIRS Conference; organizing Health Informatics Lecture Series and weekly IS research meetings

**Other accomplishments**

- Dr. Schultz-Jones was appointed the first associate chair of the Department
- Dr. Yvonne Chandler endowed scholarship was successfully established
- Three endowed professors were approved.

**2020-2021 Achievements:**

**Programs and Curriculum**

- Growing and top-ranked programs – we have the best program at UNT
- New Program – Data Science Graduate Academic Certificate
- New courses developed
  - INFO 5505: Applied Machine Learning (MS-DS core, to be taught Fall 2021)
  - INFO 5631: Search for Evidence
  - INFO 5770: Introduction to Health Data Analytics
  - INFO 3901: Data Science Internship Project
  - INFO 5091: Data Science Internship
  - INFO 4100: Introduction to Information Science (BS-IS core)
- Many of our online courses were reviewed and revised based on UNT schedule

**Faculty**

- All faculty members are excellent teachers based on SPOT evaluation scores (range from 4.2 – 4.9) with an average score of 4.6
- Significantly improved faculty scholarly productivities: Faculty has published 2 monographs, 21 journal articles, 34 referred top conference proceedings, and 16 juried full papers and book chapters.
- Faculty members receive more grants:
  - Externally-Funded Research Projects in progress:
    - NSF REU project
    - IMLS Project & NSF Project
  - New External Research Grants Just Announced
    - IMLS Project: Raise Up Radio: Family and Youth Engagement in Library Supported Learning Via Radio, $427,732
    - IMLS Project: Building capacity of school librarians to provide services for English language learners (Els): $132,893
    - IMLS Project: Data Science for the 21st Century Library and Information Professions. Project total: $87,298

Challenges
- The pandemic
- Budget constraints and Income concerns
  - We need to collaborate with the University and the College and require more support.
  - The Department’s income from out-of-state tuition decreases as we have fewer domestic students
- Limited physical resources: Lab space for student employees; Larger classrooms
- Short of faculty and staff
  - The Department has large enrollment increase but failed to fill faculty positions
  - We need more faculty to advise doctoral students
  - Need more staff for external relationship and the Data Science Programs
- Potential enrollment concerns
  - MS-DS: Heavily depending on international students
  - Decrease of domestic MS and IS students

Q&A of the Presentation
- D Connery and R B Lawson suggested opportunities and research directions
  - There are a lot of opportunities and directions to research how rural library staff are educated since we mostly focus on the academic library.
- R B Lawson discussed student retention and suggested investigating about reasons why they leave the program
- J. Bekker wanted to know what the Department are doing now to recruit domestic students
  - The Chair responded that we had not done much on this, but we had a plan for it. We open online courses to attract more domestic students, and connect with libraries, and connect with local organizations through conferences.
  - R B Lawson suggested having more connection with alumni, and not only for financial donations, testimonials, get them involved in student mentorship, etc
- J Bekker also suggested investigating skills in need from some governmental systems, working with other departments to consider incorporating some of the skills in the program, such as writing a proposal for a project, etc.
D Wu asked what strategies of our Department to distinguish our DS program and programs in other universities:
- The Chair responded that we focused more on applied DS and emphasized the data aspect rather than the algorithm aspect.
- Jashley discussed the fact that UNT offers different DS degrees in different departments and considered whether we could market and support for each other.
  - The Chair responded that it might be hard since every Department wanted to have their own program, but actually programs had different focuses. For example, we focus on applying algorithms to particular fields.

Faculty and Staff Introduction
- Faculties take turns to introduce themselves, their courses, and their responsibilities

Group Discussion
Participants are divided into 6 groups to discuss 5 topics. Their reports are summarized as follows:

Group 1: Visibilities and Impacts of the Department of Information Science (DIS)

1.1 What are the opportunities and obstacles for DIS visibilities and impacts?
- Opportunities to connect with students from other colleges in UNT
- Serving alumni and seeing how they're connecting.
- Regarding data science program, emphasizing what differentiates us from other programs

1.2 How to increase DIS visibilities and impacts within UNT and externally?
- Branching out in professional organization conferences, not only library conferences
- Connecting with alumni

1.3 What can the Chair (associate chair), the directors, the faculty, the staff, the students, and alumni do to increase DIS visibilities and impacts?

Group 2: DIS Curriculum

The Faculty has been continuously working on enriching DIS Curriculum. We offer a variety of courses in Library Science, Information Science, Data Science at the bachelor, master, and PhD levels for our six degree programs: BS-DS/IS, MS-LS/IS/DS, and IS-PhD and other programs. We would like, however, to review our curriculum annually so it reflects the needs of our professions.

DIS courses for undergraduate students:
http://catalog.unt.edu/content.php?catoid=26&navoid=2775

Bachelor of Science in Data Science: https://informationscience.unt.edu/bs-data-science-program-requirements
Bachelor of Science in Information Science:
https://informationscience.unt.edu/sites/default/files/bsis_degree_plan.pdf

DIS courses for master and PhD students:
2.1 Based on your understanding, experience, and the actual needs of your organization, what courses/content should be offered to DIS students in different programs?

- The concept of data visualization needs to be taught and as an early precursor class for data science. Since many data science projects do not lead to anywhere, gaining this skill will help students understand the project, the vision, the direction, and the outcomes of the data project. Data story stelling could be a good name for the course.
- Regarding library management, we need to be able to teach managers to be mentors of managers.

2.2 What are the compelling knowledge and skills for DIS graduates?

- The group does not have a good feel for expectations or skill set that are needed for students, especially, DS students. They suggested that what we should do is help students have a good survey of the available major systems and a skill set in need.
- For INFO 5000, a job description analysis assignment may be a good example to address this issue.

Group 3: Industry Connections and Alumni Engagement

With more students, the Departments need to work on connections with organizations and companies for students’ internship and practicum. We also realize that more needs to be done for alumni engagement.

3.1. What are your suggestions to build relationships with industries and other organizations for student practicum/internship, research collaborations, and seeking support?

- Problems of students: they are not qualified or unable to figure out the needs of industry. So the important thing is to make visibility.
  - How to make our program visible for the industry in social media such as LinkedIn. We can have coordinators on LinkedIn or other social media platforms to build these kinds of virtual connections
  - We want to make visible to the ability of the students. For example, get students involved in practical projects
- We can proactively connect with companies for internship
- We can also collaborate with alumni and the people in the industry
- We can develop courses based on the industry's need, such as designing courses with SAS for DS program.

3.2 What are your suggestions to engage alumni at the Departmental level?
- Keeping connecting with our alumni to update alumni information, and storing their information, and job duty
- Having virtual or local events that will motivate alumni to come back to the campus to connect with them.

**Group 4: Fundraising**

While we are asking more support from the University for our programs, the Department has limited income from OSTF for its operation. I need help from the Board on fundraising ideas, experiences, and strategies.

4.1 What are the strategies for fundraising?

- Intentional development plan
  - Doing a focus group with alumni.
  - Identifying the people who would be good donors.
  - Updating with alumni very frequently
  - Appreciating their donations and continue to engage them
- Goals and objectives and evaluation can not be accomplished without measurement. We need administration involvement to handle this

4.2 Successful fundraising experiences if any? Please describe.

**Group 5: DIS Strategic and Working Plan 2021-2025**

The Department is in the process of developing its Strategic and Working Plan for 2021-2025. This group will review current DIS Strategic and Working Plan at: https://informationscience.unt.edu/sites/default/files/unt_is_strategic_and_working_plan_2020-2024-v4_0.pdf to raise questions and propose new tasks for the new Plan.

5.1 Please review DIS 2020-2024 strategic & working plan to identify questions you may have regarding the Plan.
- Rural libraries may benefit from having some sort of concentration or certificate program geared towards the needs of rural libraries. Some in need are Telehealth and health informatics.
- For example, an undergraduate program or concentration to targeting public libraries, including rural libraries our example would be like a concentration in library

5.2 What are the 1-5 most urgent/important tasks for the Department in 2021-2022?

5.3 Any addition/revision suggestions to the Plan?