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Computation and Research in Data Science (CARD) Board Meeting Minutes

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2018 November 14 - Computation and Research in Data Science (CaRD) Minutes

Computation and Research in Data Science, East Tennessee State University

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November 14, 2018

312 Gilbreath Hall

Present: Brian Bennett (Computing), David Currie (Information Technology), Frank Hagelberg (Physics), Dana Harrison (Management and Marketing), Michele Joyner (Math), Nicole Lewis (Statistics), Phil Pfeiffer (Computing), Melanie Richards (Media and Communication).

1. Update of ETSU Data Science

Status of the ETSU Data Science initiative: The dean of CAS, Gordon Anderson, proposed an "interdisciplinary program in Data Science" at the last meeting of the Trustees, 9/21/2018. Dr. Duncan will meet with Dr. Anderson and discuss establishing a Data Science program that goes beyond the interdisciplinary minor outlined in a whitepaper submitted by CaRDS.

Ballad Health has announced that it will make a statement about its commitment to collaborating with ETSU by January 2018. Dr. Duncan plans on arranging a meeting between members of CaRDS as well as ITS with delegates from Ballad Health.

The College of Public Health is finalizing a major NIH proposal. The subject is drug abuse in Appalachia. A total of 100 million dollars over four years is requested. Should this proposal be successful, the associated indirect cost would generate funds that might in part be used to support the ETSU Data Science venture.

2. Inventory of currently taught ETSU courses related to Data Science

Dr. Joshua Whitlock, Director of Institutional Research Applications and Data Systems, used ETSU Degree Works (an academic advising audit tool that helps advisors and students track their degree progress) to provide us with a list of data-relevant courses in the current ETSU curriculum. The list is a useful first step towards our envisaged ETSU data course inventory, but it has some redundancy, and major editing is needed to turn it into a practical tool.

3. Previous action items

The proposal to extend M.S. level aid to four years for M.S. students enrolled in dual degree or progressive degree programs, submitted by Brian and Phil: no response has been received so far from the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Scott Kirkby.

Addendum 11/16/18: responding to Phil's inquiry, Scott Kirkby wrote:
"..The proposed policy received a favorable reception, but…my concern is this might take a few months to be approved."

Three novel data-related courses in the Department of Computing (using Python, using R, and data visualization) are to be reviewed by CaRDS members.
These courses will be ready for review in the near future. At present, the new cybersecurity concentration of the department has priority.

4. Joining the South Big Data Innovation Hub

The South Big Data Innovation Hub is a network of southern/southeastern states, with more than five-hundred members, including universities, corporations, local administrations etc. Among other goals, the Hub seeks to support partnerships between academia and industry, and to build Data Science capacity for education development. It appears beneficial for ETSU to join this organization. Dr. Edmon Begoli, one of the Hub directors, could assist ETSU in joining the Hub and making useful connections with other members. Having graduated from ETSU in 1998, he is currently Chief Data Architect with the Computational Sciences and Engineering Division at ORNL. He visited ETSU for a seminar talk a few years ago.

It was suggested to invite Dr. Begoli once more, asking him to present a CaRDS seminar talk in the upcoming spring semester. This will give us a chance to inquire about Hub membership and related opportunities, for instance teaming up with other members of the Hub to write joint proposals on research and educational projects, or being granted access to the Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI), a major computing resource associated with the Hub.

5. CaRDS seminar:

Our last CaRDS seminar this semester will be on Monday, December 3, 4.00 pm at Brown Hall, Rm.265. Jeff Knisley will give a talk with the title
Toward the Integration of Data Science Methods with Traditional Scientific Approaches

Current status of the seminar program for the spring semester 2019:

Dr. Xenia Mountrouidou from the Department of Computer Science at College of Charleston will give a talk on data-related aspects of cybersecurity.

Dr. Philippe Giabanelli, Department of Computer Science, Furman University, will visit us on some Wednesday in February. Topic of his talk: to be announced.

6. Other items

We discussed adding new members to the CaRDS board. Brian suggested including Dr. Ferdaus Kawsar, Department of Computing. Ferdaus collaborates with QCOM faculty and could thus be a link between the CaRDS board and the ETSU College of Medicine. Further, Dr. Mohammad Khan, Department of Computing, announced interest in joining the board. His expertise includes Vehicular Communication and Wireless Sensor Networks, besides other areas of interest for Data Science. There were no objections towards offering CaRDS board membership to both candidates.

David emphasized the importance of backing up data. As one of the major advantages of ETSU's association with Amazon Web Services, large data volumes generated by our researchers can now be backed up to the Amazon cloud.

The meeting adjourned at 4.00 pm.

Next meeting: no date has yet been set. We agreed that it should be held some time between 12/10 and 12/12.