

**Academic Program Review
Department of Computer Science
Faculty of Engineering
University of Victoria**

industrial demand in the early 2000s. Because of this program lateness, the Department faced the challenge of declining enrolment for CS majors. Department leaders worked very hard to build relationships elsewhere across campus, to create joint programs with a number of other academic units. These efforts led to not just meeting but far surpassing the DTO goals in terms of undergraduate registrants. This success has created one major area of concern, namely a teaching load that is significantly higher than other comparable units across the entire university. We note that the departmental self-study document, and many of our on-site discussions, did not fully recognize the significant adverse impacts of the current student teaching load.

Areas of concern

Our summary of areas for concern articulates both the symptoms and what we speculate to be the causes, so that we can more accurately provide recommendations that will help address those concerns. The primary concern is about how high the teaching loads have become, as a result of the broad university engagement to create joint programs with CS. In particular, the table of Equivalent Enrolments Taught (EET) and Full Time Equivalents (FTE) on pages 36-37 of the self-study indicate that the Department has a load of 36.4, which far exceeds the next highest in Engineering (21.2), and is well above the University average of 22.6. This is the primary area of concern because it has negative impacts on morale, the ability to recruit and retain highly talented faculty, and the strategic direction of the

consensus therein can be confirmed. One key recommendation is to use a significant number of the planned faculty hires to recruit strong teaching faculty to complement those that have already been hired. More teaching faculty will help not only relieve the overall teaching loads, but also address the concerns of research faculty about encroachment on their research capacity (e.g., reduction in research topics courses, increase in cross-listed undergrad/graduate courses, reduced time and energy for individual research programs).

Overall, the Department's responses to the DTO program during an era of declining CS enrolments was innovative and constructive, and have led to many excellent opportunities for students in these inter-disciplinary programs. In this regard, it must be judged as extremely successful. However, in part because of that success, they find themselves in quite a different position, with unsustainable class sizes that are eroding their capacity to teach their core courses, to offer a range of specialized courses in support of the research interests of faculty, and to pursue new areas of interest and demand.

As already noted, there has not been a strategic review for some time, and it is now time-critical to establish strategic consensus at the Department, Faculty, and University levels, and create a long-term sustainable strategy to address these major issues.