University of Toronto – Faculty of Information
Master of Information Student Council
October 9th, 2012; 4:00-6:00pm
Student Lounge, 7th Floor, Claude Bissell Building

Agenda

Present: Jessica Gallinger, Laura Chuang, Alexandra Kwan, Sanjin Kuduzovic, Mari Vihuri, Pam Murray, Kim Pham, Ashley Bodiguel, Brooke Gardhouse, Katrina Cohen-Palacios, Wendy Traas, Kate Restivo, Laura Sorbara, Sarah-Anne de Groot, Melody Tacit, Gillian Eguaras, Ned Struthers, Emily Porta, David Jorjani, Daniela Cancilla, Octavio Escalante Menchaca.

Official Regrets: Nonna Volodina, Allison Moore, Darrell Joyce.
Absent: Simren Singh, Ramona Sansait.

Recorder: Alexandra Kwan.

The meeting was called to order at 4.09pm with quorum established. Council members introduced themselves.

1. Approval of Agenda
    Second: Emily Porta
    Vote: Passed –Unanimous

2. Reading and Approval of the Minutes: Some minor (e.g., grammatical) revisions were made to the minutes.
    Second: Mari Vihuri
    Vote: Passed— Unanimous

3. Business Arising from the Minutes: IPSI specializationlack of course offerings: this issue has been resolved. During last month's meeting it was discussed that a required course for IPSI students was not offered during the 2012-13 academic year, which meant second-year IPSI students would be unable to complete course requirements to graduate. The student in question contacted the Dean to resolve the issue, and now IPSI students are able to finish their specialization to graduate.

4. Reports by Executives:
    a. President (Jessica)
        i. Elect IS Rep:
            MOTION: Mari made a motion to appoint Emily Porta to be the 2012-13 Information Services Representatives.
            Second: Jessica Gallinger.
            Vote: Passed—unanimous.

ii. Elect FC reps: 13 total; elect 5:
MOTION: Laura Sorbara made a motion to appoint Mari Vihuri, while Ned Struthers, Kim Pham, Alexandra Kwan, and Katrina Cohen-Palacios volunteered to be 2012-13 Faculty Council Representatives.
Second: Jessica Gallinger.
Vote: Passed– Unanimous.

iii. Meeting with building manager (lighting in lounge, e-waste recycling, photocopying in Inforum and 6th floor, paperless classrooms campaign): Last week, Jessica met with the building manager. They talked about improving the lounge lighting to high-efficiency lighting. The lights closer to the lounge windows are not used a lot, so they may not merit expensive upgrades. The building manager is determining what lighting is currently installed, and may install a motion sensor. Corner lights closest to the lounge door are on constantly and cannot be turned off for safety reasons. They also talked about printing, especially printing on the 6th floor; the manager noted that faculty prints a lot of items. Jessica suggested a "green iTea" to promote paperless classrooms and encourage other environment-friendly behaviours among faculty and students. Jessica notes that UTM has had some successful green initiatives there, so Jessica will contact them. Melody asked if double-siding was the default setting in the Inforum? Jessica responded that it was not the default setting. She had talked to Kathleen Schaeffer (Inforum Librarian), whose survey indicated that students did not want double-siding as a default. The FI also generates a lot of e-waste. Currently, there is no place to recycle e-waste in downtown Toronto. . Tyler Hunt, from the Energy and Resource Management Fund, referred Jessica to a member of U of T's Computer Science department who is dedicated to green recycling. She will contact Ivan Sestak (IT Administrator) as well. Melody noted that the David Suzuki Foundationran a program that exchange money for e-waste. Laura S. made a suggestion for the green iTea: instead of using paper cups and napkins, attendees should use mugs. She also volunteered to wash them, as it is counterintuitive to have a green event while serving food using paper. Emily noted that she went to IKEA to purchase ceramic plates, on behalf of the Tech Fund. She also purchased good-quality utensils, but accidentally paid $64 for silverware. However, she still has the receipts but was unsure whether to return the items. Jessica: we have mugs, which we don't use. The iTeas are run by the Life & Times committee, and are an ongoing process. Room 728 used to have a sink, but it was removed and will replaced with a dishwasher.

b. Vice President (Laura): Laura Chuang is heading two projects this year: the request for organic waste bins in lounge and the second annual Mental Health iTea. She is looking for ideas for the iTea, and would like for it to take place during November, rather than the winter semester. Mari noted that this month is mental health month and that MISC could begin advertising it for November. The first iTea was in memoriam of an MI student. Laura C. suggested that this year's iTea could be a place for others to share their experiences. Prizes could be aimed towards actively

improving mental health or de-stressing (e.g., vouchers for yoga, calming teas, etc.). Jessica pointed out that last year's prizes were donated in January by faculty. Prizes included: a grand prize of an Eaton Centre gift certificate, a Christmas platter, movie passes, iSchool merchandise. Laura C. asked if MISC could circulate a wish list. Jessica mentioned that mid-November could work for scheduling the iTea, but it does not leave a lot of time to plan. Laura C. is trying to put together a proposal to approach faculty. Jessica mentioned that if anyone has anything to send to the faculty, please send it to Jessica (who has access to their list-serv). Laura S. agreed that students would be better served if the Mental Health iTea took place during the first semester.

c. Secretary (Alexandra)

    i. Fall election participation and turn-out: Alexandra thanked the new MISC members for joining, and the rest of MISC for offering their support during the September elections held online. All but one position was acclaimed and voter turn-out was disappointingly low (66 votes in total), considering the amount of advertising it received via multiple channels (i.e., email, social media, posters, in-class announcements). Melody: only one position was to be elected, so people might not have seen it as important. Mari: numbers jumped after announcing it in classes, and distributing nomination statements in-person. Earlier posters had the link 'voting.utoronto.ca', which immediately directed voters to the ballot, instead of to the candidates' blurbs. Jessica said it not a bad turn out, and that usually ~100 people typically vote; thus, the number of voters is not significantly lower. In GSU's last election, only 3% voted. Laura C. asked how many students were in the faculty. Jessica replied that there were about 440 students at FI. Katrina stated that she voted after being approached at an iTea. Ned suggested that announcements could be placed on Blackboard. Jessica said that we would need to ask faculty to post it, but could approach key professors who teach multiple classes. Sarah-Anne asked why the fall elections did not have voting booths. Jessica responded that MISC was planning to have voting booths, but there was only one position to vote on. Such a small election was not worth dedicating about 20-30 man-hours to a booth.

    ii. Winter Course Enrolment dates: Update: The letter to Student Services, regarding the simultaneous course enrollment dates, was prepared collaboratively and read to council members (please see letter appended to end of minutes). Laura C. inquired whether MISC had corresponded with Student Services prior to writing the letter. Alexandra responded that she corresponded with Adriana via email, and the letter was borne out of last meeting's discussion. Jessica added that only executive members were signing it on behalf of MISC, because full MISC signatures (~30) might be felt as overwhelming or hostile by Student Services. Ned felt that the enrollment process was difficult because many courses filled up within five minutes, but understood second-year student's point of view. He agreed that first-years and second-years should not be competing for courses simultaneously. A first-year MISC member inquired whether the letter indicated representation for first-year students. A council member noted that Laura. C. would sign the letter and thereby provide evidence of first year support.

MOTION: Wendy moved to accept the letter as presented to council.
Second: Ashley.
Laura C. inquired about the process for graduating students who are unable to get into their required courses. Jessica responded that Student Services will likely accommodate these students, but it presents logistical challenges for students. Mari added that SS will not add sections or classes in most cases. Ned asked whether students can graduate if they are unable to enroll in a course that is required for completing their concentration, which is now recorded on the 2012 cohort's transcripts. Jessica asked Sanjin to forward this question to the Programs Committee. Laura S. added that she is a student who switched paths midway through the program; thus, it is imperative that she enrolls in (and completes) four required courses next term to graduate.
Vote: Passed– Unanimous.

d. Treasurer (Sanjin)
   i. MISC Budget: Sanjin: In terms of budget allocations, our revenue is consistent from year to year and is about $20 000. This year's revenue will be slightly less due to decreased enrollment, but not by much. Allocations are based on previous years. Once we give the amounts to our committees, they provide budget proposals and projections. At this point, Pam delivered her report. See section: 5b.
   ii. Student Reserve Fund (SRF): Jessica presented the guidelines for SRB to council. Jessica stated that MISC holds $20 000 in reserve, and the "2012-2013 Special Reserve Budget Proposal" is a proposal to spend some of the reserve money. MISC is planning to maintain $10 000 in reserve and to allow the remainder to be spent on special projects over time and without the expectation to spend it all at once. Jessica welcomes the student body to submit project proposals to MISC. Under the SRF guidelines, deliverables should have enduring value to students (beyond 2012-2013 year). Alternatively, funds could be provided for special events, which must be inclusive to the entire student body. Budgets for these projects would require approval from council; in addition, each purchase would need special approval by council.

   MOTION: Laura S. made a motion to approve the SRF guidelines.
   Second: Ned.
   Laura C. inquired about placing MISC funds into a tax-free or high-interest savings account. Jessica responded that MISC is looking into transferring the funds into a savings account and this initiative is named in the last line of the SRF proposal.
   Vote: Passed— Unanimous.

   Quorum was lost at 4.56pm due to council members leaving. No votes were held after this point.

e. Webmaster (Mari)
    i. Reminder to new council members re: blurb & photo: Please send in the blurbs and photos in order for Mari to post them on the MISC website.
    ii. Update re: moving to new server & upgrading to Drupal 7: Mari spoke to Ivan today about the old server which holds MISC's website. We will be moving to new server and a newer version of Drupal; this will involve setting-up and porting over all the content. The URL will redirect to the new server once this is complete.
    iii. Reminder to committee chairs to set up meetings to discuss their online presence: If committee chairs wish to have their own webpage, please contact Mari to set up a meeting about designing their webpage.
    iv. New letterhead and business cards: Mari showed the letterhead to council, and is currently working on templates. A council member asked who receives the business cards. Mari responded that members may print a reasonable number of cards if they want them, about 20 cards per person. To confirm names, she will also send out a spreadsheet of council members' names.
    v. Photography for MISC events & Facebook page: Mari volunteered herself as MISC's photographer if committees (particularly PD and Social) wish to take photos at events. Mari currently asks people if she could take their photo. She asked council members whether MISC should provide consent forms. Laura S. Kathleen O'Brien (FI's Communications Officer) asked people to sign consent forms during the Alumni iTea. It was mentioned that if these photos were printed, we would need to ask for written consent. Ashley suggested providing disclaimers in events' advertisements, so that attendees will be aware that their photo may be taken during events. Mari pointed out that disclaimers in ads plus providing Mari with verbal consent should be sufficient.
    vi. Google indexing of PDFs on website: Jessica pointed out that Google is indexing our PDFs. There is a concern that MISC's minutes would be viewed by anyone running a Google search on our names. However we can tell to Google to stop indexing our documents. This will be implemented on the new website.
    vii. Reaching out to student-run clubs/activities to send me their events for the calendar: Mari will obtain the list of groups that participated in PD's Clubs & Associations Day, and inform them that they may contact her if they have events to post on MISC's event calendar.

5. Reports by Committees:
    a. Academic Affairs (Allison): Submitted written report to be read (Read by Jessica, condensed by Alexandra)
        i. Class Rep Forms: We currently have 15 of 38 class rep forms turned in. Allison emailed the professors who have not yet turned in their class rep form on Monday, asking that they do so, including an electronic copy. She advised professors that submissions via email is fine if it is easier for them or the student. Allison plans to send the list of class reps (as many as we have) to Mari by next Wednesday (the 17th) to be posted.
        ii. Student Evaluation Committee: Allison sitting on the Student Evaluation Committee, which is tasked with choosing the questions that will be asked when

the iSchool (or U of T) implements the new course evaluation system developed by U of T. The most notable feature of the system is its focus on learning outcomes and objectives, rather than being bogged down in 'strongly disagree, disagree, etc.' metrics. It appears to be a better system, but choosing questions is tricky—thus far, the committee agreed on major themes to ask questions, based on the stated MI and MMSt expected program outcomes. The questions will check to ensure that all classes are contributing to the aforementioned learning objectives, as well as providing metrics for the classes, professors, and possibly TAs. Interestingly, the recommendation of CTSI (U of T's Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, which designed the course evaluation system) is that results be made public, though professors will be able to opt out if they so desire. The professors are presenting our results to-date to the Faculty Meeting to discuss the learning objectives the committee came up with. It is still early, but it is intended that all students will answer the new questions at the end of the Winter semester.

iii. The Key: Allison currently has the key for MISC's mailbox. It will be given to Jessica in a week or two once all class rep forms have come in and Allison stops getting mail.

Laura S. mentioned that the COMPASS evaluations still have not been provided for summer courses. Alexandra and Mari responded that this is likely because FI does not have an Associate Dean. Jessica will bring up the issue with Dean Ross. Jessica stated that in the future, the mailbox key will remain in the office so any council member can retrieve mail.

b. Professional Development (Pam and Kim):
   i. Follow up to iTea: The "My Summer of Professional Experience" iTea did not have as many people attending, since it was the second iTea of the year. However, Pam had no choice of dates for this event.
   ii. New PD co-chair Kim: Pam welcomes MISC's First-Year PD co-chair.

c. Social (Ashley & Darrell) – NO REPORT

d. Merchandise (Nonna): Submitted report, read by Jessica and condensed by Alexandra)
   i. Merch Sales: Nonna will sell merchandise every Thursday from 12-1 in Bissell's lobby. She will also be taking suggestions for button slogans during this hour. Anyone with creative ideas should speak to Nonna in the Bissell lobby on Thursdays from 12-1, or e-mail her at nonna.volodina@mail.utoronto.ca. She would appreciate a couple volunteers to advertise merch sales through facebook statuses or tweets.
   ii. Contigo Merch: Nonna is currently in the process of ordering Contigo water bottles to replace the tin water bottles that do not sell very well. The water bottles will be blue with 2 x 2 in. white slogan. Jessica and Nonna wanted to take a vote of the slogan today, but are still unsure of the template and parameters of the slogan on the bottle. Once she hears from Contigo about the measurements

for the slogan, she will send out an e-mail to everyone for input. The slogan will be "Master of Information. To save time, assume I know everything." When the bottles arrive, Nonna would like these to be advertised on the electronic boards in Bissell lobby and the Inforum.

iii. Merch Arrivals: In the last couple weeks, travel mugs have arrived. Pens should be arriving shortly. Nonna and Jessica examined the travel mugs, and some of the imprints were smudged. She sent an e-mail out to Wendy Wright about this. Hopefully she can offer an explanation or a discount.

Laura C. inquired what percentage of revenue that Merch comprises. Jessica replied that it does not significantly contribute to MISC's revenue. Merch exists more as a service to students, rather than a revenue generator. Also, lots of items are given away. Laura S. inquired about the cost of the water bottles. Jessica: They are expected to cost about $10; however, the exact cost is to be determined because of the cost of bottles, shipping, and printing.

6. Reports by Representatives:
   a. Alumni Association (Brooke) – NO REPORT

   b. MISC-MSGSA Liaison (Katrina) – NO REPORT

   c. Admissions Committee (Wendy)
      i. September AC meeting: The committee met on Sept 24th to talk about the changing mandate of the Admission and Awards committee—it is now also responsible for handing out awards to new students. Logistics to increase enrollment and attract students included iSchool ambassadors, who would do more outreach work to help potential and incoming students. Wendy said that the committee also discussed improving the website, wanting to make awards available sooner to students, as well as implementing path/concentration liaisons (e.g., faculty who would act as representatives for students). Brooke asked about the liaison positions as potential opportunities for current students or alumni. Wendy responded that it is still being discussed, but presumably the opportunities would be for current students. Jessica noted that we already have liaisons for concentrations. Wendy: Perhaps the committee was referring to using them more often than they currently do. Also, the committee plans to inform people sooner that they are award recipients. Often, students will choose the other schools over FI because they are offered awards by the other schools sooner than FI.

   d. Faculty Council (Jessica et al.)
      i. Establishing a committee to look at 5th floor Inforum space: Dean wants to remove books to storage, Robarts, or Bissell's basement in order to establish lab space (e.g., an archives lab to work with original documents). This would be an opportunity to do hands-on work before getting placements. Three labs were suggested, including a Database lab. Committee of faculty and student representatives will be made to consider 5th floor space plans. Laura S. asked

who would be on this committee. Jessica said it would be brought up at a council meeting to appoint four students. Faculty have been telling students that the Dean is going to remove books but Jessica said that students should not panic. There will be an opportunity for students to participate in the decision-making process.

   ii.   Establishing a committee to look at digital course offerings in Faculty of Information: online courses at the FI. The committee will be investigating whether having online courses is a good idea, what currently exists, what literature has been written on it, and the advantages/disadvantages. U of T is reviewing its policy on online courses. Although this conversation is occurring at the university level, FI is also considering the issue as a faculty. Jessica is waiting to hear back about this. Melody questioned why is online courses would be a good idea at masters level, but acknowledged that having an online component makes sense in the Practicum course. Mari pointed out that FI has an online course shared between U of T and University of Western Ontario for the Library Advocacy course (INF2152), and another for International Documents (INF2137). Jessica commented that FI's delivery of these courses seems to be ad hoc, without an articulated policy or framework.

e.   Graduate Students' Union (Jessica, Laura, Ned)

   i.   Academic and Funding Commissioners' letter to the ON gov't: GSU had its first meeting of the year. Academic and Funding Commissioners wrote to the Ontario government, which is trying to improve graduate education in Ontario and recently published a document about it. The GSU got feedback from students through surveys and town hall meetings. Sanjin commented that GSU's letter was well-written and pragmatic. It was requesting more funding, and more apprenticeships like those in Germany. Adopting measures like these would make sure grad students can enter the workforce, and that graduate students have the skills that employers look for.

f.   Student Tech Fund (Emily, David, Octavio)

   i.   Eco plates and cutlery purchased (sort of): See 4.a.iii.

   ii.   Tech Fund Ideas Party: TF wants to host a big party for students and faculty on October 26th, including alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. A small part of the event will function like Dragons Den; students will pitch ideas to improve the iSchool (e.g. nap rooms, trial items to improve the space, etc.). TF will put up a $1000 to make the chosen ideas happen, so the proposed idea can be anything costing less than $1000. Starting this week, MISC representatives should spread the word and advertise. Everyone is welcome, including MMSt students. If there are two really great ideas, TF might give more than $1000 in total. Although the TF money is usually spent on technology and workshops, it can be put towards anything that students want to spend money on. Mari expressed her approval of the event and reiterated the importance of advertising it. Students could include their pitch on a resume/CV. Alexandra asked Emily about licensing for serving alcoholic beverages in the lounge. Emily will be in

contact with Food & Beverages Services at U of T. Students will pay for alcoholic beverages, but food and other beverages will be free.

iii. Workshop progress: LLC is putting together a design fundamentals workshop (customized for iSchoolers) in which students will learn how to use Adobe Photoshop, and how to use those skills to apply to specific projects geared towards information professionals (e.g. branding). These will take place on two Sundays: October 28th and November 4th (tentatively starting at11am). Each day will be about five hours (including time for lunch). This workshop will have 30-35 spaces, and will be free for students.   Computers will be set up with Adobe Photoshop 6. Mari asked about the registration procedure. Emily responded that the first people to email TF will be registered.   She also mentioned instituting a deposit system (about $20 paid by those who register) in order to make it fair. Ned agreed it was a good idea. Jessica noted that the Social Committee tried to use a deposit system for the Haunted Tours event during student orientation, but some students did not show up at either event to pay the deposit. She suggested that if a deposit system is implemented, the money would need to be collected in-person (e.g., in MISC's office, lounge), but before the actual event. However, sufficient time needs to be allotted to collect deposits. To clarify, the TF workshops are not the same as the Information Services workshops (which are largely run by the Inforum). Brooke: Will the Tech Fund workshops be offered next semester? Mari noted that the IS's HTML/CSS workshops that happened two weeks ago, were not favourable among students who attended, and asked Emily if the TF could offer another HTML/CSS workshop to make up for it? David mentioned that LLC workshops cost around $3000+. LLC's HTML/CSS workshop in May was not customized; thus, it cost less than $3000. Customization for the Design workshop is more than $3000. It was asked whether we want to do this every year. It was clarified that the TF has a pool of money, which is entirely separate from the MISC's funds. The TF's money comes from students, and the total amount is matched by faculty. Prior to two years ago, there was very little spending from this pool of funds; thus there is still about $100, 000, despite the thoughtful spending last year and this year. TF needs to increase the spending to benefit the students. Logistically, difficult things (like renovations) are not possible with this fund;. They are looking for ideas on how to spend the money. Emily noted that not too many people serve on the TF (apart from the MI and MMSt student representatives). Ivan Sestak is part of the TF and Mari attends as the IS rep. Sanjin asked about proposals. Emily responded that the TF will conduct large surveys, which are used to generate reports. From last year's survey, students wanted Design and HTML/CSS workshops. The new computers were also included in the report. There was a strategic planning meeting to discuss how to move forward, with regards to cyclical purchasing for technology. Those meeting minutes (about the strategic plan for spending) have been made available on the MISC website. The plan includes a $5000 contingency fund (in case there is a technical emergency), as well as funding high-quality workshops. A council member asked whether the TF would still need to arrange workshop sessions if they were filmed properly. Both second-year TF Representatives agreed that funding these

workshops every year is important because hands-on learning is more important than viewing coding language. A council member asked if we hold these workshops every year, would it be possible to ask LLC to work out a discount or other arrangements? Emily said that LLC is a non-profit organization, and clarified that the HTML/CSS videos were only to be made available to students of that year— not indefinitely.

iv. HTML/CSS workshop payment: The upcoming design workshop costs over $3000, an amount which needs to be voted on by council. A roll-call vote was suggested, but since quorum was lost before voting, an email vote will be conducted.

MOTION: Emily motioned that council vote for the customized design workshop, which costs $3390, including tax. David added that the workshops were worth the costs, since 6-8 people will be teaching 35 students to learn the program and that these students can help others students learn.
Seconded: Jessica
Vote: TBA.

v. Convocation speaker: If students have any ideas about who to invite as our convocation speaker, they should let the TF know.

Jessica asked if TF can we get more games for the lounge's Wii. Emily noted that the next TF meeting is October 15th at 3pm.

g. Information Services (Mari) – NO REPORT

h. Life and Times Committee (Daniela) – NO REPORT

i. Programs Committee (Sanjin): (Sanjin supplemented his verbal report with a written report)
   i. 2 New Concentrations: Culture & Technology + Knowledge Media Design: The two concentrations have been revised a number of times and are being re-submitted for approval by SGS which will coincide with the approval of the other program paths. In the fall 2013 semester, they will officially all become concentrations.
   ii. MI Curriculum Review Subcommittee: In addition to facilitating and organizing curriculum initiatives, this committee was created for the purpose of designating faculty liaisons for the program concentrations in order to improve both the quality and coordination of the program.
   iii. Added Participation to KMD Collaborative Program: The KMD Collaborative Program has initiated an academic partnership with the following faculties / programs; Museum Studies, Study of Religion, Drama, Theater and Performance Studies.
   iv. Proposal for MMSt Concentrations: Museum Studies Prof. Costis Dallas has proposed two tentative concentrations for the Museum Studies program in order to improve employability of students. One would concentrate on a partnership

with the government sector and the other would focus on cultural heritage. The development process will likely take 1 year before implementation can take place.

    v.   Update regarding program concentrations for 2nd year students: Current second year students will not be able to take advantage of the faculty's transition toward concentrations and therefore will not be able to have their path of study included on their transcripts. However, they may include this in their resume / CV and if confirmation is required by either an employer or an academic institution, a letter will be provided by Student Services. Jessica asked whether Student Services had notified students. Sanjin responded that Adriana said that the information was posted on the FI website in August. Jessica thanks SS for making special accommodations for students, but noted that the service needs to be advertised. 2nd year students misunderstand some of these program changes and clarification/advertisement of changes is required.

    j.   Committee on Standing (Simren) – NO REPORT

7.   New business: Laura C. inquired about MISC's procedures for projects (e.g., by TF and iTeas), whether projects can be conducted autonomously or if plans must be submitted. Jessica responded that it depends on the committee and personal preference; however, special projects require a budget proposal for MISC to vote upon. Further questions should be directed to Jessica.

8.   Motion to adjourn: Mari
Second: Laura S.
Vote: Passed—Unanimous.

Carried at 6.03pm.

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October 9, 2012

Adriana Rossini
Registrar & Director of Student Services
Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
140 St. George Street, Room 216
Toronto, ON M5S 3G6

Dear Adriana:

We are writing on behalf of the Master of Information student body to express our concerns about the issue of course enrolment, and to request separate enrolment dates for the upcoming Winter term such that second-year students will be given priority.

For the past four years, second-year students have been allowed to enrol in courses before first-year students. However, Student Services has observed that:

1. Second-year students enrol in more courses than they actually expect to take, making it difficult for first-year students to enrol in courses.
2. When courses are offered in both the Fall and Winter terms, second-year students enrol in Fall courses and drop them shortly after, knowing that they will be given priority to enrol ahead of first-year students in the Winter term.
3. Students are delaying core and required courses until their second year in the program, rather than taking them when they should at the start of the program.

Based on these observations, Student Services has decided to schedule both first-year and second-year students to enrol for Winter courses on the same day this November. While we appreciate the administrative challenges posed by coordinating course enrolment, the Master of Information Student Council believes this decision does not take into consideration the needs of the MI student body.

Regarding the first two points, students do enrol in more courses than they actually expect to take, and drop Fall courses with the intent of taking them in the Winter. However, these actions are not being taken, as Student Services has implied, maliciously. The majority of MI students must juggle their academic commitments with part-time employment as well as professional development activities, in order to ensure their chances of success post-graduation. Students should have the right to adjust their course selection and workload to best suit their circumstances, without having to worry about whether or not they will get a spot in a class they need to graduate. As Student Services has stated that caps will not be increased nor sections added to accommodate demand for any particular course, the only natural recourse for students in this position is to enrol in more courses to ensure their spot.

Regarding the third point, students do spread out their core and required courses across their time in the program. At no point have they been instructed to do otherwise. In fact, the "possible timetables" for completing each path that are posted on the Faculty of Information website direct students in several paths to take certain required courses during their second year. Likewise, students who change their paths mid-program would be unable to complete their required courses during their first year. If Student Services believes that a flexible curriculum is an insurmountable obstacle for planning and resource allocation, they should bring their concerns to the Faculty Council instead of penalizing students who followed the advice they had received.

Additionally, in light of the recent changes made to the MI curriculum, the current first-year students (2012 entrants) have fewer core/required courses to complete than the previous cohort. This leaves the current second-year students (2011 entrants) at a significant disadvantage on enrolment day. Second-year students will be competing for space in courses they need or hope to take before graduating, with first-year students who have much more freedom to select their courses—freedom which the second-year students did not have in their first year.

We understand that ensuring fairness to all students was important in making this decision, and we strongly support this goal. However, implementing this policy would be grossly unfair to students in their second year of the program, and especially unfair to the current cohort of second-year students who registered in the Fall with the expectation that registration would proceed as it had since they joined the iSchool. The most effective way to ensure that course enrolment is fair to as many students as possible is to maintain separate enrolment dates for first-year and second-year students. Second-year students will be able to enrol without worrying about meeting their requirements to graduate, and first-year students will enjoy this enrolment priority in their second year. Student Services will likewise benefit from a student body that can easily cooperate with a clear and consistent enrolment policy.

We hope that Student Services will appreciate the gravity of this situation, and continue to offer separate enrolment dates for first-year and second-year students. We look forward to a timely response on this matter.

Sincerely,
Master of Information Student Council

_____
Jessica Gallinger, President

_____
Laura Chuang, Vice President

_____
Alexandra Kwan, Secretary

_____
Sanjin Kuduzovic, Treasurer & Programs Committee Representative

_____
Mari Vihuri, Webmaster & Information Services Representative