Dear Dan and Joe,

As you know, we are in the process of creating a new undergraduate data science degree in order to capitalize on investments to the university as part of the Presidential Data Science Initiative. I believe that this program will bring synergistic gains to the entire university because it will enhance our standing as a strong research campus and help recruit increasingly qualified students. It is our expectation that the Data Science Program will recruit new students to campus, leading to a net increase in the total number and quality of students on campus, rather than being competitive with existing degrees.

At this point, we have initiated the degree approval process. The degree will at least initially sit within CAS under a new Program in Data Science, and so the degree and course approval process is moving through the CAS curriculum committee. This will ensure that the program curriculum fits within university guidelines and complements our current offerings.

Because data science is a multidisciplinary field that relies on fundamental aspects of mathematics and computer science, data science majors will be required to enroll in several courses from the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Computer and Information Science.

Additionally, five new data science courses will be developed, each of which will involve application of mathematical and computational techniques. As such, I am contacting you to ensure that the proposed Data Science Program, including degree requirements and related new course offerings, will not be seen to generate a negative impact on your department as a whole or on your existing courses. Additionally, we want to make sure that there is not significant overlap with existing MATH and CIS course offerings, or that if significant overlap exists, that we can put appropriate measures in place to ensure that student’s do not receive duplicate credit for taking multiple courses that each teach the same content.

I’m including in this email an undergraduate curriculum summary, complete with degree plan, as well as syllabi for the set of proposed new data science courses; note that some of the syllabi have edits and comments, as we are in the process of finalizing these for submission to the CAS Curriculum Committee.

Please feel free to comment on any of the offerings as well as the general degree structure. I am also happy to answer any questions that you might have.
Thanks so much for your help with this.

Bill

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