

Budget Meeting, Master's Degree in Data Science

Minutes

February 22, 2019

403 Ross Hall

Present: Brian Bennett (Computing), David Currie (Information Technology), Frank Hagelberg (Physics), Michele Joyner (Mathematics and Statistics), Phil Pfeiffer (Computing), Bob Price (Mathematics and Statistics), Vicent Thompson (Information Technology).

The meeting addressed questions related to the budget for the planned Master's degree program in Data Science. Prior to submitting the respective program proposal, a Letter of Notification needs to be presented to the ETSU Academic Council and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). This letter will contain an estimate of the budget for the first five years of the program.

- Budget items discussed in the meeting:

Personnel: three positions are to be filled – program director, full-time faculty, and executive aide. The ETSU Office of Institutional Research could advise us with respect to current salary figures.

Computation: ETSU currently works on a partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS). David Currie will contact AWS Educate, a grant program for educators, academic researchers and students. The AWS Educate Classrooms option which allows teachers to set up their own virtual teaching space could be of interest for ETSU Data Science courses.

At the same time, the importance of maintaining the partnership between ETSU and the Advanced Computing Facilities (ACF) was emphasized, as ACF provides access essential research software not available through AWS.

Student tuition and fees: to estimate the net expense during the first five years of the program, the revenue due to student payments must be taken into account. It was agreed to conduct student surveys in the Math Department as well as the Department of Computer Science to assess the number of students during the first five years of the program. Further information will be obtained from departments not associated with the Data Science core disciplines, such as Psychology, Management and Marketing, or Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

Along similar lines, we will assess the present interest of ETSU students in obtaining a Data Science Certificate, associated with a doctorate.

- Outreach to local industry:

A further discussion point was outreach to local companies which may be interested in sponsoring the planned Data Science program, offering internships, or funding the degrees of

individual students. Also, statements from local companies in support of the Master's program will strengthen the Letter of Notification.

In the first place, it will be important to determine what skillsets are required by industries in our region. Jeffrey Alston, director of ETSU Career Services, and Karen Sullivan, director of Corporate Relations/University Advancement might be able to get us into contact with local business. Bill Duncan joined the meeting and agreed to assist with the outreach initiative. A summary of the presently existing plan for the Master's degree will be sent to him shortly.

The following companies were mentioned:

Ballad, Eastman, Nuclear Fuels, Siemens, Bristol Tennessee Essential Service (BTES), CGI.