

**Response of the Faculty Senate to the Final Report of the
Provost's Task Force on Computing and Information Science**

(CAPP: 29 November 1999)

WHEREAS, the Provost's Task Force produced a Final Report on Computing and Information Science that was made available on 16 November, and

WHEREAS, the Final Report contains positive elements but does not adequately reflect the motions of the Faculty Senate that expressed deep reservations about essential elements of the Initial Report and that were passed by strong majorities on 13 and 20 October, and

WHEREAS, the proposed FCI would have powers and resources characteristic of a college,

BE IT RESOLVED that,

1. The Faculty Senate reaffirms that its Motions 2 and 3 are a sound basis for initiating an adaptation to the needs for computing and information science and technology in instruction and research that arise out of the Information Age. The Provost is urged to adopt the suggestions made by the Faculty Senate, to consider other organizational alternatives such as the "virtual college" suggested by Dean Cooke, and to report to the faculty as his deliberations progress.
2. The Faculty Senate reaffirms the importance of its recommendation to create an independently selected, broadly based Executive Board that will assist the Dean for CIS and will be empowered to set policy for that office.
3. The Faculty Senate's strong opposition to the creation of an FCI (Faculty of Computing and Information) expressed by the adoption of Motion 4 has not been allayed in the Final Report. It is imperative that an entity, such as the proposed FCI, not be created unless a much more detailed proposal is available and has been given deliberate faculty scrutiny and explicit approval by the Faculty Senate.
4. The Faculty Senate maintains that there is little faculty support for the proposed creation of a university-wide undergraduate computing instruction program modeled on the Knight Writing Program. Thus the Senate recommends that this proposal by the Task Force not be pursued on a significant scale.
5. The Faculty Senate instructs the Dean of the Faculty to advise the Board of Trustees, in addition to the President and Provost, of this resolution adopted by the Faculty Senate.

Rationale:

We find this Final Report to be largely unresponsive to the Senate motions, adopted by strong majorities, and to be largely a reiteration of the positions taken in the Initial Report of June. Thus we find ourselves also largely reiterating the points made in the motions adopted previously by the Senate.

Senate Motions 2 and 3 provide a basis for organizing to respond in research and undergraduate education to the challenges posed by the Information Age. Furthermore, this basis is minimally disruptive of ongoing activities in this area and of well-tested principles by which Cornell and other universities have been managed (e.g., the placement of the responsibility for faculty lines). Nor do these motions preclude

eventual movement in directions urged by the Final Report should they prove desirable as experience is gained. An example of a direction in which the organization can develop was provided by Dean of Faculty Cooke in his memorandum of 25 August (see the University Faculty Web Site) where he discusses a notion of a virtual college inspired by the success of the Graduate School.

A central recommendation of the Final Report is the creation of an FCI similar in conception to the original one of the Initial Report that was rejected by the Faculty Senate in its passage of Motion 4. What has now become clear is the emergence of the FCI as all but a college in name through its possession of such critical powers and resources of a college as the governance of departments and their budgets and control over faculty hiring, promotion, and tenure. Having assumed for the FCI, and largely for the Computer Science department, the faculty privileges and perquisites of a college, the FCI plan stops short of accepting all of the attendant responsibilities, particularly those for undergraduates. There is, indeed, a projection in the Final Report that the FCI might before long become a college in all respects, particularly those involving the admission of students to its degree programs. This is highly disturbing insofar as its adoption is being contemplated as an administrative action absent a deliberate faculty consideration of the appropriateness of a new college. Colleges exist on time scales of decades, not months, and their creation should reflect the seriousness of such a long-term commitment and of the corresponding restructuring of the University and redistribution of resources. Furthermore, should the FCI not be viewed as a college, then we oppose granting jurisdiction over faculty lines to units unless they are departments in colleges.

There is a lack of detail in the extensive discussion devoted to the creation of the FCI that makes it difficult to pass informed judgement on its desirability. It is clear that it will not admit undergraduates, but it is less clear what it might mean for undergraduates to have majors in the FCI while they are enrolled in other colleges. Regarding the control of faculty lines for individuals not in the CS department, this would provide the Dean of the FCI with gatekeeping powers that would allow the FCI to influence who could be hired by departments in colleges outside the FCI. There is a vagueness about the distribution of hiring authority and about the responsibilities of those faculty whose appointments would be shared with the FCI and their home departments. What would be the status of non-CS faculty holding joint appointments? What would determine the length and character of their appointments? How would the FCI participate in their tenure reviews, if tenure reviews are contemplated? What is to be the size of the FCI? Earlier discussions envisioned about 200 members. However, Dean Constable in discussions with CAPP suggested a size of about 60 members, or 30 faculty in addition to about 30 members of CS. The only certainty about the FCI is the persistence in all discussions that the FCI would be the home for Computer Science.