Computer Science Department
(1970-1997)
Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

Department Chairs

| Lou Birta 1970-79 | Tunçer Ören 1979-82 | Jacques Raymond 1982-88 | Ivan Rival 1988-91 | Luigi Logrippo 1991-97 |

A Capsule History of the Department of Computer Science

Foundation: The Department was preceded, in the late sixties, by an undergraduate Computer Science program, developed by Stewart Bainbridge of the Department of Mathematics and Moshe Krieger of the Department of Electrical Engineering. The University's Senate approved a motion for the creation of the Department of Computer Science within the Faculty of Science and Engineering in February 1970.

First years: The Department began its operation with two professors in August 1970 and was located in two "gray houses" on King Edward Ave. (a site now occupied by Brooks Residence). The move to its permanent location in MacDonald Hall occurred in December 1971 and was made feasible by the relocation of the Department of Mathematics. Over the course of several years, the Department expanded from its initially allocated space on a portion of the third floor to the entire third and fourth floors of that building. Professorial staff continued to increase at the approximate rate of one new hire per year. By its tenth anniversary in 1980, there were 10 teaching staff positions. Undergraduate enrolment was of 80 in the first year of operation, and grew rapidly until the early eighties. It dipped (together with similar programs throughout North America) in the late eighties and early nineties, but grew again in the late nineties. By the mid-eighties, all compulsory courses were taught in both languages

Graduate programs: The Department began offering graduate courses starting in 1976 but a Master's program had to wait until an agreement was reached with Carleton University, following recommendations to this effect by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies. The joint Master's program started in 1982. The Ottawa-Carleton Institute for Computer Science (a joint initiative with the School of Computer Science at Carleton University) was created in 1987 to administer graduate studies in computer science at the two campuses. The PhD program began in 1990.

The merger: In late 1996, Rector Marcel Hamelin proposed the merger of the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science into a single unit within the Faculty of Engineering called the School of Information Technology and Engineering (SITE). This merger became official on May 1, 1997, although the Department's existence as an administrative unit continued for another year. At that point, the Department had about 400 undergraduate students, 60 graduate students, 20 professors, 6 administrative and secretarial staff, 2 technicians and 3 systems programmers. The computer science degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels continue to exist within SITE.

In 2000 all Computer Science Department staff and laboratories were relocated in the newly completed SITE Building

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