Since its inception, UW Computer Science & Engineering has been able to control the enrollment levels in its degree programs. Each UW CSE faculty expansion has been carried out in the context of an explicit “contract” that related faculty positions to enrollment. With rare exceptions, these expansions have been funded centrally (often by special legislative appropriation) rather than through the College in which we were housed, in recognition of the fact that CSE is in many ways a unit of the entire University and its growth should not “come out of the hide” of a specific College.

Here is “a brief history of UW CSE,” omitting some minor perturbations for the sake of clarity:

1967-68: Established as the “Computer Science Group,” an interdisciplinary graduate program reporting to the Graduate School, with 1 faculty member.

1974-75: Departmental status conferred. Became an inter-college unit reporting to both the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Engineering.

1975-76: Had reached 9.6 FTE faculty. Received 4 additional faculty positions for introducing a Bachelors program in Computer Science that would award 40 degrees per year.

1979-80: Provost moves the department to the College of Arts & Sciences (eliminating the reporting relationship to the College of Engineering).

1983-84: Had reached 13.5 FTE faculty. Received 7 additional faculty positions for growing the Bachelors program in Computer Science to 80 degrees per year.

1988-89: Had reached 20.5 FTE faculty. Provost moves the department to the College of Engineering. Received 1.83 FTE of partial appointments of EE faculty, plus 6 new faculty positions for introducing a Bachelors program in Computer Engineering that would award 40 degrees per year. (This was an explicit legislative budget line.)

1996-97: Had reached 28.5 FTE faculty. Received 5 additional faculty positions for introducing a Professional Masters Program that would award 40 degrees per year. (This was an explicit legislative budget line.) Also received a special position for a senior recruitment.

1999-00: Had reached 34.67 FTE faculty. Received 6 additional faculty positions for growing the Bachelors program in Computer Engineering to 80 degrees per year (for a total of 160 Bachelors degrees per year). Also received 3 additional faculty positions for research initiatives. (UW chose to fund the Bachelors expansion out of general institutional enrollment funds rather than a high-demand initiative which was available that year, although startup funds were obtained through an explicit legislative budget line to the HEC Board. The 3 research-related positions were explicit legislative budget lines.)
2002-03: Provost converts Professional Masters Program from state-funded to self-sustaining.

2006-07: Had reached 40.67 FTE faculty, with an additional two positions still to be filled.

2007-08: Legislature provides high-demand funding to UW. Originally, the Provost planned to allocate none of this to CSE. After much tussle, with some funds coming from the Dean of Engineering, CSE received 7 new faculty positions to grow the Bachelors program from 160 to 184 degrees per year (50% of what we had requested), add a 5th year Masters program producing 10 degrees per year, and add 20 FTE Ph.D. students producing an additional 4 Masters and 3 Ph.D. degrees per year.

2008-09: Had reached 43.17 FTE faculty, including 1 position received from the Dean of Engineering for the ExCEL initiative. The 7 positions received in 2007-08 remain to be filled.

2009-10: At 43.67 FTE. Budget cuts rescind all of the 2007-08 funds, and more. All enrollment increases are rolled back with the exception of the 5-year Bachelors/Masters program, which is continued at a nominal level (although unfunded) in fairness to our students. One additional position still to be filled.

You can see from the charts below that, modulo ramp-up time and the inevitable year-to-year variability, our performance has precisely tracked our commitments.

UW CSE Bachelors Program
Degrees Granted

We have never explicitly received funding for growing our full-time graduate program, with the exception of a small amount in 2007-08 that was rescinded in the budget cuts of 2009-10. The number of Masters degrees per year that we grant in our full-time graduate program has remained relatively constant over time. (Data prior to 1986 is a nuisance to obtain so I haven’t bothered.) The number of Ph.D. degrees per year that we grant has been growing steadily; a linear trendline is plotted.