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Chair's Message

It is with pleasure that I write this letter for our fourth annual FSU CS newsletter. There are a number of recent events that have recently occurred. In April 2009 we held a reception to celebrate 25 Years of the FSU Computer Science Department. Given the recent budget cuts that FSU has faced, we are very happy to report that no CS faculty or staff members were laid off.

The number of undergraduate students that are majors in the department has significantly increased in the last year. We are now offering a revised Bachelor's of Arts (BA) in Computer Science. CS faculty, staff, and students continue to be honored with various awards. I hope you read this newsletter to find out the latest events concerning the department. I also encourage you to explore the department through our web pages and to visit us in person.

25 Years in Computer Science at FSU

The FSU Computer Science Department was created in 1984, so we just completed our 25th year as a department! Computer Science (CS) grew out of the FSU Mathematics Department and BS, MS, and PhD degrees were established at the same time the CS Department was created. For several years the department had chronically few resources, including a small number of faculty members. In the late 1990s, the Dean of Arts & Sciences allowed the department to begin aggressive recruiting. Several of the new faculty members had only a partial commitment to CS, with their remaining assignment being in the Office of Distributed and Distance Learning (ODDL), Learning Systems Institute (LSI), or the School of Computational Science and Information Technology (CSIT). In addition, some of the hires were made in non-tenure track, non-research lines to address the special needs of a few service courses with large enrollments. During the next five years, the department's faculty head count doubled. This growth in faculty numbers enabled the department to take on more graduate students, expand its course offerings, and achieve national and international visibility in several areas of CS research.

During this period of growth, the department offered their undergraduate curriculum via distance learning (DL) as well as on campus in the conventional classroom mode.

However, there were practical difficulties. The department learned that offering CS courses through distance learning is more time-consuming for the faculty, due to course material development and individual communications with students, than teaching a course in the conventional mode. The Panama City campus wished to offer an undergraduate degree in CS, but needed additional students to make the degree program viable. The Panama City campus agreed to take over the distance learning offerings of the CS degree program along with concurrent local classroom offerings of the courses.

The department proposed a graduate certificate in the area of information systems security (INFOSEC) that subsequently led to the National Security Agency recognizing FSU as a Center of Academic Excellence in Information Education (CAEIAE) and recently as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Research (CAE-R). This eventually led to significant funding for scholarship-for-service grants. Information security courses are also available to undergraduates, as electives in support of the bachelor's degree program.

The CS Department faculty have become much more active

Faculty News

in seeking external funding to support research and scholarships for students. We currently have 13 of the 16 tenure-track faculty with external research funding. We have also received a Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) grant from the Department of Education for PhD fellowships and at its peak in 2008-2009 supported 9 PhD students.

Throughout its history, the department has performed a large service function to the University, teaching courses in computer programming, and more recently computer literacy, to large numbers of students in other majors. These courses serve thousands of students each semester and support a large number of computer science graduate students as teaching assistants.

The CS Department offers bachelor's degrees, an MS degree, and a PhD degree. The bachelor's degree in CS, established in 1984, has different tracks for the BS and BA. The BS degree in Computational Biology, established in 2006, was jointly developed and is administered by the Biological Science and CS Departments. The BS degree in Computer Criminology, established in 2007, was jointly developed and is administered by the CS Department and the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice. The MS and PhD degrees are both in CS and were also established in 1984. The MS degree currently has three majors, which are CS, Information Security, and Software Engineering (SE). The SE major is only offered at the PC campus. The PhD degree we offer has only a single major, which is Computer Science. This degree is only offered at the Tallahassee campus.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Honors and Awards

There have been several awards obtained by CS faculty, staff, and students during the last year. Andy Wang and Zhenhai Duan were promoted to associate professor and tenured. Gary Tyson and Xin Yuan were promoted to full professor. Mike Burmester's Harris Professorship was renewed for another three years. Andy Wang has received the prestigious NSF CAREER award. The National Science Foundation offers these awards in support of the early career-development activities of those teacher-scholars who most effectively integrate research and education within the context of the mission of their organization. Professor Wang is the second CS faculty member to receive this award in the last three years. Sarah Diesburg won the P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) award, which was the first time an FSU CS student received this honor. Roshan Newa received an FSU University Fellowshipt. Akil Merchant received an FSU Teaching Fellowship. Justin Debrabant has been selected as one of the 13 winners for this year's FSU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Award from the Office of National Fellowships Advisory Committee at FSU. Justin's proposal, which he prepared together with his undergraduate honor thesis advisor Prof. Feifei Li, "Ranking and Aggregate Query Processing for Large Scientific Data with Fuzzy Information" was selected from a pool of 55 submissions.

Faculty Changes

Sara Stoecklin at the Panama City campus has retired. Sara was the first CS faculty member at the PC campus and spearheaded the development of the program there. She is currently still teaching PC and distance learning students as an adjunct. We are very pleased to announce that David Gaitros rejoined the Computer Science Department after spending two years at the FSU Office of Technology Integration.

FSU Designated as a CAE-R

FSU has already been re-designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education (CAEIAE). FSU has now also been designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Research (CAE-R). The goal of these programs is to reduce vulnerability in the national information infrastructure by promoting higher education and research in Information Assurance (IA) and producing a growing number of professionals with IA expertise in various disciplines. The vision for the CAE-R program is to establish a process that will present opportunities for IA research centers to investiage solutions to securing the global information grid and provide NSA, DHS, and other federal agencies with insight that can support advanced academic research and development capabilities.

The Impact of Budget Cuts on the FSU Computer Science Department

While no faculty or staff members in the FSU Computer Science Department were laid off, our department has still been impacted by the massive budget cuts that FSU has endured during the last few years. Most of the faculty and staff positions have not been replaced when faculty or staff members have left the department. Our department budgets for various expenses and supporting teaching assistants have been significantly cut. These budget cuts have made it challenging to provide the proper support for our courses and to keep equipment in the department, including our Majors Lab, up to date. We have also had to reduce the number of hours that we can keep our Majors Lab open for our students. Finally, we have had to suspend some of our annual scholarships for students. If you would like to help the Computer Science Department, then please consider contributing. Information about how to contribute is given on the back page of this newsletter.

Alumni Events

Each Friday before Homecoming in the Fall semester, the CS Department sponsors two events. The first event is a "Grad Made Good" presentation by a former FSU CS student. This year this presentation will be at 2pm on October 30 in CAR 101 (the Carraway building is just north of the bookstore). The speaker will be Yaohang Li who graduated from FSU with a PhD in Computer Science in 2003. Dr. Li is a professor in the Computer Science Department at North Carolina A&T State University. During the second event later that same day from 4pm to 6pm we will have our annual FSU CS alumni gathering, which will be held at Beef O'Bradys. You should be receiving an invitation for these Homecoming events during the Fall semester. Each Spring semester about a week before final exams there is the CS Honors Ceremony. We honor the achievements of CS students and faculty and we also induct the latest set of students who have qualified for Upsilon Pi Epsilon, the CS honor society. Please check the calendar on the department main web page for notification of the CS Honors Ceremony.

Number of Majors in FSU Computer Science Department Significantly Increase

The FSU Computer Science Department has had a significant increase in the number of undergraduate majors over the last year. The number of majors associated with the department increased from 217 in Fall 2008 to 322 in Fall 2009. There are likely many contributing factors, which include development of new degree programs offered by the department, the difficult economic times which inspire students to major in fields deemed more employable, and the advertising of our degree programs. Our graduates are currently still in high demand even though the economy has slowed and obtaining employment is a challenge for many other fields. We welcome the increase in the number of students in the CS Department as we are confident that these students will make a positive impact on the country's economy after they graduate.

Nominating CS Faculty for Teaching Awards

The Florida State University Teaching and Advising Awards Committee is seeking nominations for awards recognizing faculty for excellence in teaching and advising. Did you have a CS professor whom you consider to be an excellent teacher or adviser? Please mail, fax or e-mail a nomination form(http://provost.fsu.edu/faculty/awards/information) to the University Teaching and Advising Committee, 212 Westcott Building, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1310. If you choose to fax the nomination, the number is 850-644-0172, or it can be e-mailed to mvanos@fsu.edu. These awards are announced during the Spring term; therefore, your nomination must be received before Friday, January 1, 2010.

Revised BA in Computer Science

The Computer Science Department decided to revise the requirements for the Bachelor's of Arts (BA) in Computer Science (CS). The BA in CS previously required all of the same courses for the BS in CS with the addition of 9 hours of humanities that is required for any FSU BA degree.

We found that recently no students were taking this option. The department decreased the BA in CS requirements for mathematics, physics, and computer theory courses and providing instead additional general electives. While we encourage our CS majors to pursue the BS option if they are capable, we do believe that the revised BA in CS requirements will still be attractive to employers and will make the study of CS more accessible to students who are primarily interested in applications outside the sciences and engineering.

FSU FOUNDATION
www.foundation.fsu.edu
Computer Science Fund

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

If you would like the opportunity to reconnect with Florida State and the Department of Computer Science you can make contributions by check, credit card, or bank draft through the FSU Foundation. One time gifts or donations are extremely beneficial and make a tremendous difference in our efforts.

For online gifts of $25 - $250, go to:
http://www.fsufoundation.org/Main/Default.asp?CategoryID=24#
Under **"Gift Designation"** select **"Other"**. Please specify **"COMPUTER SCIENCE FUND"**

To mail a contribution and pay by check, money order or credit card, go to:
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and print the form.

All checks are payable to **FSU FOUNDATION**. Be sure to designate **"COMPUTER SCIENCE FUND"** on the form and on your check or money order in order for our department to receive your gift.

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