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North Dakota State University

Computer Science Department

Thoughts from the Head

Dr. Brian M. Slator, Department Head

Again this year we are asking for your opinion and your help.

See http://cs.ndsu.edu/NDSUCS-Survey/

The CS department's Bachelor of Science degree has been accredited by an organization named ABET since the 1980s. At various times over the years we have questioned the effort and expense required to obtain this accreditation. We have decided to investigate the accreditation concept and as part of that, we are conducting a study to help determine whether the department is getting good value or not.

To learn more about the question, we are conducting an online survey about accreditation. Does it matter to employers? Has it been a factor in any of your job interview situations? If you were hiring, would it be important in your choice of applicant? Does it matter to parents? Does accreditation help determine who enrolls? Is it a major factor? Does it matter to students? Do they decide where to attend school based on accreditation?

It is pointed out that ABET accreditation is important to certain engineering programs; for example, civil engineer licensing depends on accreditation. Others note that accreditation is mostly for smaller schools or new programs striving to establish themselves, not the Stanfords and MITs of the world. Obviously, NDSU is neither of these. So, we seek your opinion. What do you think?

Department News

It has been another interesting year-and-a-half in the halls of IACC, with some new names and faces to learn, and a few fond farewells to some old hands. You can see the rogue's gallery of new faces on page 3.

Dr. John Martin is retiring after 37 years at NDSU.

Dr. Bruce Erickson passed away Wed. Dec 23, 2009 in Fargo, ND. See http://cs.ndsu.edu/BruceEricksonObit.htm

Dr. Anne Denton has been awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, as of August 15, 2009.

In the last year, the department has had three resignations: Dr. Gu, Dr. Xu, and Dr. Du. The first two have been replaced by Dr. Tariq King and Dr. Gursimran Walia. Two new positions were added for Bio-informatics: Dr. Saeed Salem and Dr. Changhui Yan.

Dr. Max Zhang and Dr. Jun Kong won EPSCoR grants.

Dr. Hyunsook Do won an NSF grant for software engineering research

Richard Rummelt has been promoted to Senior Lecturer.

Adam Helsene was hired as system administrator and he also coaches the programming teams.

Joan Krush joined the department as advisor.

Results from Alumni Survey of 2008

Student success appears to be at a high level for graduates with the B.S. degree. A recent survey of 95 alumni indicated that only 1 was looking for work, and that 80% of the graduates were making between $50,000 and $150,000 per year. A survey of alumni of the graduate program also indicated a high level of student success. None of the alumni were seeking employment. Almost half (45%) of the alumni of the graduate program were making between $100,000 and $150,000 per year. On both the undergraduate and graduate surveys, thoughtful written comments were included on how to improve the curriculum.

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Special points of interest:

- Donate to the CS Department Scholarship fund(s) - see page 4.
- Help us out: take the ABET Survey at cs.ndsu.edu/NDSUCS-Survey/

Programming Teams Take Prizes in Competition

The NDSU Department of Computer Science was represented by two teams at Digi-Key's 2008 and 2009 Collegiate Computing Contest - DKC^3. Schools from around the region each sent 2 teams to participate.

In 2008: U of M – Morris won by only 10 points. NDSU team Dacodahs took second, winning $150 for each team member and $1800 for the CS department. NDSU's Pi Rho team came in fourth.

Our 2008 teams were:

Dacodahs: Ryan Carlsrud, Nathan Ehresmann, Robert J. Foertsch, Jeong Woo Wee

Pi Rho: Christopher Grahn, Abram Jackson, Dustin Kerber, Joel Longanecker

In 2009, NDSU's team Forseth Forever took First place, each team member winning a $200 gift card to Best Buy and $3000 for the department. Second place went to UND, and third place to St. John's. NDSU team Aftermath took Eighth place.

The 2009 teams were:

Forseth Forever: Austen Dicken, Nathan Ehresmann, Shane Ewert, Nick Laney

Aftermath: Edin Alic, Joseph Bredahl, Lucas Bremseth, Geoffrey Timm

NASA Scholarships

The North Dakota Space Grant Consortium, a NASA sponsored program, has awarded research fellowships to Computer Science graduate students in 2008 and 2009.

Aaron Marback, Otto Borchert, and Philip Reindl each won awards in 2008.

In September of 2008, Appolo 15 astronaut Col. Al Worden visited NDSU to participate in ceremonies to award the prestigious Astronaut Scholarship to Matthew Wold, a student in Ag. Engineering. Our own Jonathan Pikalek was a winner the year before.

On the strength of that, the Space grant winners and their faculty advisors took the opportunity to attend the Astronaut ceremony and meet Col. Worden. He was gracious enough to pose for pictures with everyone. Above, Col. Al Worden with Aaron Marback.

In 2009, a combined Space Grant was shared by Otto Borchert, Guy Hokanson, and Per Jensen.

ZJETP Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic

A Chinese academic delegation visited NDSU during the summer to participate in a variety of instructional workshops. The group of 11 faculty members represent Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic in Hangzhou (ZJETP), China.

The group arrived in Fargo on July 31, 2009. They took part in workshops, corporate tours and special events. The workshops focused on the content of specific NDSU courses, development of syllabi, student learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment procedures and testing methods.

The Chinese instructors teach in the areas of computer science, business and food safety. They met with NDSU President Joseph A. Chapman and Provost Craig Schnell on Aug. 13. In addition, the group was hosted at Valley City State University for two days by VCSU faculty, staff and President Steve Shirley.

The visitors were enrolled in a one-credit seminar with Kendall E. Nygard, NDSU professor of computer science, who has journeyed to the Chinese campus twice. "This visit is intended to be a step in developing a much broader partnership with Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic that includes a twinning program for undergraduate students."

NDSU faculty members and instructors who delivered the workshops and participated in the program are Dr. Kendal Nygard; Karen Froelich, associate professor of business; Joseph Latimer, instructor of management information systems; Jun Kong, assistant professor of computer science; Jin Li, assistant professor of business; Marvin LeNoue, instructor of English as a Second Language; and Deland Myers, director of the School of Food Safety.

With an enrollment of more than 6,000 students, Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its founding this year.

Other Fun Facts

Enrollment in graduate programs has steadily increased from about 100 in 2000, to over 170 in 2007/2008. Approximately 110 of these students enrolled in the M.S. program in Computer Science, approximately 30 seeking a M.S. in Software Engineering, about 20 in the Ph.D. program in Computer Science, and about 10 seeking the Ph.D. in Software Engineering. Two students were enrolled in certificate programs. About 70% of the M.S. students were in a non-thesis program.

New Faces, Mostly Faculty

Juan (Jen) Li joined the CS Department Fall of 2008 after receiving her Ph.D degree in Computer Science from the University of British Columbia for her dissertation on "Semantics-Based Resource Discovery in Global-Scale Grids." She also holds M.S. degrees from the University of British Columbia and Chinese Academy of Sciences. Jen is interested in: (1) P2P overlay networking including architecture, topology, and routing algorithms, (2) distributed search and data management, (3) semantic web technologies and (4) social network. She believes that finding good solutions to these problems requires approaches that cut across many different fields and, consequently, her research draws on areas such as distributed system, information retrieval, database systems, artificial intelligence, and networking. In her spare time, Jen enjoys skiing, hiking, camping, swimming and cycling. She likes biking in the wind of Fargo. :)

Wei Jin is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at NDSU. She earned her Ph.D in 2008 and M.S. in 2007, both in Computer Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She also earned an M.E. in 2002 from the Computing Institute of Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and B.S. in 1998 from the University of Science and Technology Beijing. She has been conducting research in the areas of Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery, Information Retrieval and Extraction, and Social Network Analysis.

Tariq M. King received his Ph.D and M.S degrees in Computer Science from Florida International University in 2009 and 2007 respectively. His research interests include software testing, autonomic and self-managing systems, model-driven software development, and software maintenance. Tariq has been the recipient of a number of awards and fellowships including the prestigious Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) Fellowship for his work done at the IBM China Research Lab in 2008. He joined the faculty at North Dakota State University this Fall as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science. In his spare time he enjoys participating in water sports, traveling, and digitally mixing music.

Gursimran Walia, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, joined the department in August 2009. He obtained his Ph.D in 2009 and M.S. in 2006 in Computer Science from Mississippi State University and B.S. in Computer Science and Engineering from India, 2004. Research Interests include: empirical software engineering, psychology in software engineering, software quality improvement, requirements engineering, human errors in software development, managing and estimating software quality, information assurance, and software engineering for computer security. He has published research in leading software engineering journal and conferences. Hobbies include watching professional sports (NFL, NBA, College football, Tennis), playing fantasy football.

Saeed Salem received his Ph.D in Computer Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York in 2009. His broad research interests are in Bioinformatics, biological networks, data mining, and machine learning. He served as a program committee Member for the SIGKDD 2009 conference, and he is on the program committee for PAKDD 2010 conference.

In his free time, he enjoys playing soccer and walking.

Changhui Yan received his Ph.D degree in computer science and bioinformatics in 2005 from Iowa State University, which was among the rare pioneer universities that offered Ph.D. degrees in Bioinformatics at that time. After spending four years as an assistant professor at the top of the Rocky Mountains, Dr. Yan looked forward to move back to the flat terrain. Now, he has finally found his dreamland, Fargo in the flat Red River Valley. In his research, Dr. Yan develops computational methods and tools to assist biologists to investigate problems in the complex biological systems. Dr. Yan has a long history of collaborating with researchers from the fields of biology and chemistry. At his spare time, Dr. Yan enjoys playing tennis. Also hopes to add hobbies like travel, fishing, volleyball, and badminton to that list.

Joan Krush is a new academic advisor/lecturer. She recently moved to Fargo from Lincoln, NE where she served as the chief academic advisor in the department of Biochemistry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Joan has a B.S. in Contemporary Media and Journalism from the University of South Dakota and a M.A. from the University of Iowa in Student Development in Postsecondary Education. She has worked in student services at colleges and universities in South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Nebraska. Joan enjoys running – mostly 5K's but has completed half marathons in St. Cloud (MN), Sioux Falls, Deadwood (SD) and Lincoln (NE). She enjoys board games and crosswords and figures she should take up knitting now that she's in Fargo!

Adam Helsene is the new CS department system administrator. Having graduated with his B.S. in Computer Science from NDSU in 2008, he is currently working on an M.S. in Computer Science. He previously served as a part-time system administrator for the Computer Science department since early 2008. Adam is currently the department's programming competition coach and adviser, working to coordinate teams and practices for regional programming and problem solving competitions. His hobbies include collecting/playing classic video games, programming and working with computers.

Computer Science Newsletter

North Dakota State University

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Inside this Newsletter:

Department News

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http://cs.ndsu.edu/

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Thank you from all of us at NDSU Computer Science!