



E-Newsletter

Offering Degrees in Computer Science and Computer Engineering

Fall 2007 Highlights

Howdy!



Fall 2007 was an eventful semester as we welcomed our first freshman class to take our new computer science undergraduate curriculum. We also welcomed our newest faculty members, Assistant Professors Radu Stoleru and James Caverlee; we will be adding more faculty in the upcoming year. This issue of our E-Newsletter highlights the vast changes to our undergraduate Computer Science curriculum. As explained below, the changes in the curriculum were implemented in order to further prepare our undergraduates for life after Texas A&M. It is our hope that these changes will better prepare our students to continue their education by pursuing Masters or Doctoral degrees or to be successful in the work force beyond academia.

Please see the sidebar for an update on faculty and student recognitions. If you want to know more about the department, I encourage you to visit our [website](#) or contact me at the email address below. I look forward to continuing to work with our faculty and friends during the Spring 2008 semester.

Valerie E. Taylor
Department Head and Royce E. Wisenbaker Professor
Texas A&M University

Contact Dr. Taylor by [email](#)

www.cs.tamu.edu

Faculty Recognition

Awards

Rick Furuta — ACM Distinguished Engineer

John Keyser — Tenneco Meritorious Teaching Award

Dezhen Song — TEES Select Young Faculty

Bjarne Stroustrup — TEES Fellow

Richard Volz — Voted IEEE Division X Director

Hank Walker — E. D. Brockett Professorship 2007-2008

Jennifer Welch — Charles W. Crawford Service Award

Exciting New CS Ugrad Curriculum

Dr. Welch and her CPSC 181 class

Computer Science undergraduates are now following an exciting new curriculum designed to give students better early preparation, and more flexibility in upper level courses. The CS curriculum underwent a significant redesign in 2005-2006, with a pilot group of undergraduates beginning the new curriculum in Fall of 2006. Beginning in Fall 2007, all incoming Computer Science undergraduates are following the redesign.



One of the features included in the new curriculum are two seminar classes -- one for freshmen and one for juniors -- that provide an overview of the wide range of subjects, research topics, and applications that make up the discipline of Computer Science.

Also, most core CS material has been merged into a smaller set of six introductory classes. Students following the suggested timeline will complete these core CS classes by the end of their sophomore year. The two freshman introductory classes were designed to give students a solid preparation for internships and co-ops by the end of their freshman year.

In addition, students have far more flexibility in upper level courses, which now follow a track system. Students take a course from each track, ensuring breadth, and take at least three courses in one track, ensuring depth. Tracks include Software, Systems, Algorithms and Theory, and Information and Intelligent Systems.

In order to ensure academic diversity, a required supporting area of courses from outside of the CS department helps give students the interdisciplinary background needed to apply their skills to 21st century problems.

The flexibility of the track system coupled with the supporting area allows students to tailor their CS degree to meet their own interests. For example, students might choose to focus their studies toward business applications, game design, computer system design, robotics, science and engineering computation, or user interaction.

Finally, a new programming studio class gives students experience in team problem solving during their sophomore year, while a new senior capstone course gives graduating students experience working on a large team design project,

Promotions

Dick B. Simmons —
Professor Emeritus

Bereavement

In Memory of
Bruce McCormick
Dr. McCormick joined the university in 1984 as the first department head of the newly formed Department of Computer Science. He was also the founding director of the Brain Networks Lab at Texas A&M. Dr. McCormick retired in August 2005 but continued his research here, exploring and understanding the complexity and scaling properties of the brain's circuit structure. Bruce is remembered by his colleagues as an inspiring colleague and compassionate friend. He held a life-long enthusiasm for interdisciplinary research and shared this enthusiasm with the many scientists whose careers he influenced.

Student Recognition

Meg Davis, George Lucchese, Dhivya Padmanabhan, and Caleb Wells — Honorable Mention, **2008**

preparing them for a professional career.

Save these dates

Apr 9: Spring Banquet

Apr 12: Parents' Weekend

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**Computing Research
Association's
Outstanding
Undergraduate Award**

Kenneth Viall —
**Graduate Teaching
Academy Award**

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