



# News Bytes

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## A Time For Change

Change is never easy, but sometimes inevitable, even desirable.

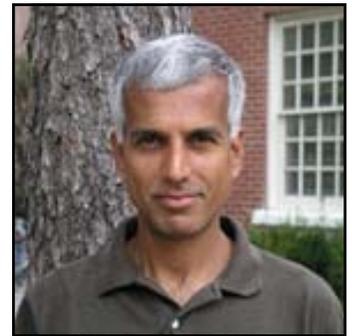
The past year has certainly seen its share of changes in the Department of Computer Science. Dr. Ron Vetter stepped down in June 2005 after five years of distinguished service as department chair. My first year as department chair has been, to put it mildly, eventful and challenging.

In August we launched our Master's program in Computer Science and Information Systems. This program is a joint venture between our department and the Information Systems and Operations Management department in the Cameron School of Business. With more than 20 students enrolled, the program is off to a promising start.

The fall semester saw the construction of the new CIS building in full swing. As one of two primary stakeholders in the building, we were involved in numerous decisions about space allocation, equipment and

furniture purchases, even paint and fabric selection! People often recall building a house with their spouse as a stressful period in their lives. Imagine building a house with several spouses and 10 million dollars—and you have the CIS building experience. With most of the construction woes behind us, we are looking forward to occupying the building in the fall, perhaps as early as October.

As the computer science program grows, one of our goals is to identify and hire faculty members in key areas. Consequently, in the spring semester we conducted a national search for an Assistant Professor in Software Engineering. We received numerous applications and after a somewhat protracted search we were successful in our effort. Devon Simmonds, who is completing his dissertation at Colorado State University in Middleware Transparent Software Development, will be joining our faculty in the fall. We are excited about his arrival, and we anticipate that his presence will add significantly to



our undergraduate and graduate programs.

Our program saw changes in other fronts too. We sent a team of students for the first time to the regional ACM Programming Contest held in November 2005 at Duke University, where they received an honorable mention. Also, in keeping with UNCW's goal of strengthening regional engagement, we are conducting a computer science (Robotics) camp for middle school students for the first time this summer.

Looking forward, I see an energetic and creative faculty, a capable student body, a fledgling graduate program, a new building - all ingredients for exciting challenges and in all eventuality more change. I invite you to be a part of this process in any way that you can.

**Sridhar Narayan, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor & Chair**

### Special points of interest:

- Faculty accomplishments
- New programs
- Outstanding students

## Faculty Focus

**Harry Smith** will travel to the city of Yaroslavl in Russia this summer as part of the Volunteer Abroad program of Cross-Cultural Solutions. During his 11-week stay, he will be doing local volunteer work while he refines his mastery of the Russian language. Did you know he has been studying the language for more than a year? Be sure to read next year's News Bytes for a follow-up on this exciting trip!

**Ron Vetter** with Charles Ward, Gabriel Lugo, Russell Herman, James Reeves, and Dale Cohen received an NSF grant for their proposal "Increasing and Retaining STEM Majors through Virtual Learning Communities."

**Ron Vetter**, with Larry Clark, and Cem Canel also received support from Corning, Inc. for "The New Graduate Program in Computer Science and Information Systems."

The Council of Graduate Schools/Sloan foundation granted Art Gowan, Bob Roer, and **Ron Vetter** with an award for their proposal to "Implement a Professional Master's Degree Program in Computer Science and Information Systems."

**Laurie Patterson's** paper, "Reaching a New Audience: Development of a Computer-Centric Minor," was published in the *Proceedings of the 2005 ASCUE Summer Conference*.

**Laurie Patterson**, and **Ron Vetter** received a Curriculum

Development, UNCW CTE Summer Curriculum Initiative award for "The Application of BLogs, RSS Feeds, and Podcasts to Online Instruction".

**Karl Ricanek, Jr., Eric Patterson**, Midori Albert, and Edward Boone, were involved in four expository mass media releases:

*Wilmington Star-News front page article*, "They've got the look," August 2, 2005;

*North Carolina Now--UNC Television Special*, "Predicting how a face will age," Fall 2005;

*Innovate Research Magazine*, "Face Recognition Technologies," Spring 2005;

*re:search: A Journey of Intellectual Inquiry*, "MORPH: Craniofacial Morphological Database: Facing the Future for Better Security," Fall 2005.

**Karl Ricanek** had publications accepted for the

International Joint Conference on Neural Networks 2005 in Montreal, Canada, the IEEE Automatic Face and Gesture Recognition 2006 conference in Southampton, UK, and the Hawaii International Conference on Statistics 2005 and 2006.

**Karl Ricanek** also won the North Carolina State NPC Bodybuilding Championship, heavy weight division, April 8, 2005!

The Department of Computer Science will welcome **Devon Simmonds** in the fall of 2006. Dr. Simmonds comes to us from Colorado State University where he is completing his doctoral program. His research focus is in software engineering.

## Student Focus



Charles White in sunglasses with fellow researchers and one of their subjects.

### Student Creates Unique Course of Study

A matter of chance led Charles White to a course of study that is as unique as his varied interests. As a freshman, Charles realized he had both an interest and an aptitude for computer science. He also had a passion for languages, so he took up Spanish as well. He was considering a double-major when he visited the office of Dr. Gene Tagliarini, in the department of computer science, to pick up a book on computer architecture. In Dr. Tag's office, Charles happened upon a book entitled *Swarm Intelligence*. Although he studied the architecture book, the swarm intelligence book

really grabbed his interest, and he realized the course of study he wanted to develop for himself.

Swarm intelligence is a branch of artificial intelligence that mimics collective behaviors observed in the natural world, for instance by bees or ants. Working with Sean Watson, '06, who was working on a project to classify butterfly wings, Charles wrote a swarm application that could segment colors on butterfly wings into their individual color components. This led to his first published paper which he presented at the IEEE Southeast Conference

in 2004. Charles had discovered his passion for "biologically-inspired computing".

Albeit reluctant to pause his research, Charles decided to spend a semester studying abroad in Spain. He hoped the experience would round out his liberal arts education, and indeed, he felt that the semester abroad brought all of his interests together.

After returning from Spain, and eager to resume his research, Charles found Dr. Laela Sayigh, in the department of biology and marine

## New Building Nears Completion

Almost two years after the ceremonial groundbreaking, construction on the new, state-of-the-art Computer Information Systems (CIS) building is nearing completion.

The building will house the Department of Computer Science in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management (ISOM) in the Cameron School of Business. The two departments have already begun collaborating through the launching of a unique, interdisciplinary graduate program that began in the fall of 2005. (See below).

The Computer Information Systems Building has some unique features such as

multidisciplinary, hands-on laboratories; dynamically re-configurable research and instructional spaces; student “sandboxes” to facilitate team-based collaborative learning; a Digital Arts Lab for computer animation and computer graphics; an electronic trading room, net-centric computing (all computing is interconnected and organized around the Internet); a mobile computing environment; electronic information kiosks with an emphasis on personalized interaction; and high-speed network connectivity via an all-fiber backbone throughout the building.

Go to <http://www.csb.uncw.edu/mscsis/naming.stm> for more information and for naming opportunities.



The completed building, illustrated at right, is expected to be ready for occupancy during fall 2006.



## Two New Programs Launched



Some of the first students to enroll in the MSCSIS program

The Department of Computer Science, and the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management (ISOM) in the Cameron School of Business welcomed the first

graduate students to the new joint program. Beginning in the fall of 2005, the inaugural group of students began working towards their Master of

Science in Computer Science and Information Systems (MSCSIS) degrees.

The MSCSIS is an intensive graduate program aimed at preparing the student to take on leadership roles in the development and implementation of computer and information systems. The curriculum requires 36 semester hours. There are six required core courses providing a mix of theoretical underpinning, technical skills, and information technology perspectives. Students can choose elective courses to provide opportunity for additional study in a variety of areas. The program culminates with a capstone experience that can be an interactive project or a thesis.

The Department of Computer Science also recognized the first graduates completing the Information Technology (IT) minor. This interdisciplinary program is designed to develop the students’ understanding of technology and its impact on society and in the workplace. It requires core computer science courses as well as electives from a variety of other disciplines.



IT Minor Graduates Tammy Mitchell and Nathan Wolf

# Upsilon Pi Epsilon

*International Honor Society for the Computing and Information Disciplines*

## 11 Initiated



Eleven students were inducted into Upsilon Pi Epsilon on April 1, 2006. The traditional induction ceremony was held in the Nixon Annex of Trask Coliseum. The 2005 UPE officers, Dean Berman, Charles White, and Maurice Benson (**pictured at right**) conducted the initiation. Following the ceremony, initiates and their guests were honored with a reception.



Above: Initiates James Buchanan Jr., Adam Gaweda, Joseph Huie, Matthew Knauss, Adam Lewis, Lorie Lucas, Jason Luke, Mark Parker, Bryce Rutherford, Christopher Williams, and Christopher Watford with UPE officers and attending faculty.

Below: the traditional lighting of the candles which represent the year of the society's founding, 1967, in binary form.



## Student Focus continued from page 2

biology. Dr. Sayigh was working on a project at the Center for Marine Science to investigate computerized methods for classifying dolphin whistles.

Charles was on board immediately and thrilled with the opportunity that lay ahead.

As an added bonus, Charles received one of only 110 Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarships awarded nationally. The scholarship not only provided academic assistance, it also provided a 10-week, full-time, paid internship at a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration facility.

For his internship, Charles applied to, and was selected at, Woods Hole

Oceanographic Institution which is affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He will further his study of acoustic communication and behavior of marine mammals by constructing a computer model from digital acoustic recording tags.

Charles hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Ocean Engineering at Woods Hole after completing his studies at UNCW.

## CSC Department Offers Summer Robotics Camp

During June 2006, Middle School students will explore robotics fundamentals while constructing a functioning robot with Computer Science faculty and students.

Demonstrations and hands-on activities will provide an understanding of autonomous robots and the function of basic electronic components.



## Congratulations to our recent graduates!

### Fall 2005 Graduates

Kristopher W. Benton, Joseph W. Blanchard, Kendall S. Crews, David A. Crist, Cecil W. Haertel III, Robert M. Harrison Jr., Kimberly D. Kelsey, Andrew J. Martin, Jason S. Movasseghi, Douglas C. Tucker, Jane A. Williamson.

### Spring 2006 Graduates

Brent "Maurice" Benson, Dean R. Berman, Matthew R. Boykin, Ryan G. Delts, Jason C. Dudley, Seiken Higashionna, Alfred S. Lavin II, Jason E. Luke -- BSB/MIS, Erik J. Mendlik, Eric G. Putnam, Allen W. Rawls, William J. Reed, Nicholas J. Reinke, Daniel N. Sarvis, Carrie M. Starr, Kale E. Watkins, Christopher D. Tice, Eric M. Veal.

CNN Money lists computer science professions in five of the top ten jobs predicted to be the fastest growing through 2014.

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/nextjobboom>



## Tech Talk

### Trivia: do you know the answers?

1. What is the unit for a mouse movement called?
2. In what year did the WWW begin?
3. What company is credited with successfully manufacturing the first notebook computer?
4. What was the first shareware program?

#### Trivia answers:

1. a Mickey 2. 1986 3. Radio Shack 4. PC Talk

### Interesting Web Sites

Getting ready to make a new purchase? Check out <http://www.product-reviews.net/> for customer reviews.

Ever wonder what an acronym stands for? Go to <http://www.stands4.com/> to look it up.

Need some software, an application, or a file? Visit <http://www.filedudes.com/> for an exhaustive list of all that is available from shareware to retail products.

### Tech Tips

- To quickly minimize all open windows in a Windows environment, you can right-click on the blank part of your taskbar, and choose Show Desktop.
- In Microsoft Word, Shift-F3 will toggle highlighted text between Title Case, UPPER CASE, and lower case.

## Calling All Alumni

What are you doing now? Where are you living? Please send us news about yourself so that we may include it in the next newsletter! Professional and personal information is welcome. Send e-mail to [mferner@uncw.edu](mailto:mferner@uncw.edu).

## Visit us on the Web:

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Enclosed is my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Computer Science Department Trust Fund (*make checks payable to UNCW*) or

charge my \_\_\_ Visa or \_\_\_ Mastercard Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date (mm/yyyy)\_\_\_\_\_

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Return to: Advancement Services, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 601 South College Road, Wilmington NC 28403

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