Faculty Feature: Richard Watson

Dr. Richard Watson is an Assistant Professor who joined the faculty here in the fall of 1999. He was the first person to receive a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Texas at El Paso. Richard’s areas of research include Artificial Intelligence, Logic Programming, Non-monotonic Reasoning, and Knowledge Representation. His recent research, which is being funded by United Space Alliance, has been in developing an Intelligent Decision Support System for use with the Space Shuttle. Flight controllers and astronauts could use such a system in order to help plan for correct shuttle operation in case of multiple failures.

While being active in research, Richard also says he loves teaching. Graduate courses are usually closer to his research interests, but he says teaching undergraduates is special because you are helping a wide variety of people achieve their goals. He is eager to involve students of all levels in research and tries to keep an open-door policy to all.

The decision to come to Tech was an easy one, Richard said. He sees Computer Science as a young, growing department that is heading in the right direction. To help the department grow and prosper, Dr. Watson is actively serving on several committees, including the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Search Committee, as well as chairing the Computer Committee. He would like to see the department continue to grow while at the same time strengthening both the curriculum and the relationship with students. In closing he stated, “I want students to graduate from our program feeling that they have received the best possible education, not just in content, but also in having had a faculty that cares.”

CS Given Go Ahead for Renovations

Computer Science has been allocated funds for limited renovations of the Engineering Center Building, as well as more space in the building’s basement. The department has formed a renovation committee chaired by Dr. Eric Sinzinger to set priorities for the project. Other committee members are Dr. Donald Bagert, Keri Gleason, Mysti Digby, and Todd Quasny. Currently the committee is looking on ways to renovate the basement area (where CopyTech was formerly located) as well as portions of the 3rd floor. If you’d like to contribute to the renovations of the Computer Science Department, please contact Mysti Digby at 742-3527 or Mysti.Digby@ttu.edu.

Faculty/Staff Bytes

We had two new associate professors join CS this fall.

Xiaoqing Frank Liu comes to us from the University of Missouri – Rolla, and researches in the area of knowledge-based software engineering. Hector Hernandez comes to us from New Mexico State University and researches in the area of database management.

Michael Gelfond, Professor, recently joined the CS department and has a paper that is listed as the 10th most cited Computer Science paper in the world!

Larry Pyeatt and Eric Sinzinger, Assistant Professors, will be stepping down as Graduate Advisors, and Noe Lopez-Benitez will be assuming those duties.

Pam Otto, Secretary II, will leave the CS department at the end of the year to join the Texas Tech Library as a Library Specialist.

Robin Countryman, Lecturer, has accepted a position with National Instruments in Austin, TX.

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Several of our staff received Safety Awards this fall. Mysti Digby, Business Manager, received a plaque for 10 years without an accident, while Per Andersen, Director of Advanced Computing Facilities, and Joe Pizzi, Director of Undergraduate Labs, received 5 year plaques. Both Keri Gleason, Academic Program Assistant, and Derek Birkenfeld, Technician III, received certificates for 1 year without an accident.


When he wasn’t writing articles, Dr. Cooke was working on research grants. Some recent awards include “Umbrella Grant with Texas Tech and United Space Alliance” in Houston, TX, with Dr. Gelfond and Richard Watson, “Development of a Parallel Version of SequenceL with Experiments on and Application to Neural Network Approaches to Image Processing,” from NASA Headquarters, with William J. B. Oldham, and “Yield Tracker: A Yield Mapping and Prediction Information Delivery System,” from the USDA-CREES, with Donald Bagert and Susan Mengel.

Drs. Watson and Gelfond wrote a section for the as-yet-unpublished Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science. They also had a paper titled “An A-Prolog decision support system for the Space Shuttle” co-written by Monica Nogueira, Marcello Balducci, and Matt Barry, accepted to both the ASP 2001 Symposium and to the PADL 2001 Conference.


Dr. Frank Liu received a grant from Toshiba Co. for his project, “Transformation and Analysis of Customer Requirements to Improve Customer Satisfaction.” He also published “Software Quality Function Deployment” in the December issue of IEEE Potential.

Don’t Forget!

The ACM Banquet will be held in April 2000. We always love to have alumni attend!

We also have an on-going faculty search for Computer Science. We invite applications for several positions at all levels to begin employment in the fall of 2001. We will begin reviewing applications on January 15, 2000. Priority will be given to applicants whose areas of interest include distributed and high performance computing and complexity.

Applicants at the assistant professor level must have the requirements for the Ph.D. in computer science or related field completed before employment, and should demonstrate clear potential for effective teaching and research. In addition to holding a Ph.D. in computer science or a related field, applicants at other ranks should have a proven record of scholarly accomplishments, including a strong record of publications and funded research commensurate with rank.

Applicants should send a letter expressing interest in the position, a detailed resume, and the names and addresses of three professional references to: Daniel E. Cooke, Chairperson, Department of Computer Science, PO Box 43104, Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX 79409-3104. For additional information, see our website: http://www.cs.ttu.edu/FacSearch/.

All questions should be directed to dcooke@coe.ttu.edu. Applications will be reviewed as they are received, until the positions are filled. Applicants must be able to lawfully accept employment in the United States. Texas Tech University is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer.

Homecoming 2000

We had several alumni join us for Homecoming this year. Virginia Martz came in from Los Alamos, NM, as well as Mike Shelton and Scott Terrell & his family from Dallas, Dennis Carroll from Houston, Tom Payton & his family from Post, and Jim & Tonia Ollerton from here in town. Hope we see you here next year!
Programming Team News.....

The ACM South Central Regional Programming Contest was held in Baton Rouge, LA this year. TTU sent two teams. Team Black, consisting of Julian Hooker, Adam Kohler and Srividya Kona, placed 42nd out of 69 teams, while Team Red, consisting of Ajay Bansal, Joe Pollard and Nathan Rogers, finished 4th, right after Trinity University. Todd Quasny coached this year’s teams, while Dr. Larry Pyeatt continued as Faculty Advisor to the teams. Way to go teams!

Thank You!!!!!

We’d like to extend our thanks to all the alumni, corporations, and friends that have contributed to the Computer Science Department in the last few months. All of you make a huge difference in what we’re able to accomplish!

$10,000 & up  $100-500  $20 & up
Gary & Maria Ruwalt  Tom Payton  Roberta Davis
Lucent Technologies  Greg Storm  Beverly McIntyre

$5,000 & up
ExxonMobile Corporation  Chris Smith
David Seese  Michael Buckles

Alumni Updates

Dottie Bargas (BSCS’96) recently called from Paris, FRANCE! She is still working for Alcatel there, and loves living in Paris. We don’t know if she’s ever going to come home….

John Frazier (BSCS’92) writes that last spring he was selected to accompany the BancTec Chairman's Club on a trip to Hawaii in recognition of his contributions to the company during 1998. In the fall, he was promoted to Manager of the Dallas-based development group for Image Archive systems. He and his wife Amanda celebrated their fourth wedding anniversary this past April.

Dan Jagnow (BSCS’95) is working for Wireless Verticals, Inc as a Software Developer in the Austin area. He and his wife April have recently moved into their new home in Round Rock.

Donna Wilson Kreidler dropped by the main office recently and is now working for Cap Gemini Ernst & Young and living in Irving, TX.

Virginia Hill Martz (BSCS’87) joined us at Homecoming this year. She continues to run her business Vista Control Systems in Los Alamos, NM and reassured us that this summer’s fires missed her neighborhood.

Matt Merritt (BSCS’95) writes to tell us that he got married last spring to Carol Reynolds of Irving and is working for Terion Inc. It’s a small start up company that develops communication and tracking equipment for the trucking industry. This deals with GPS, cell phone, radio waves, email, web, etc.

Lawrence Peck (BSCS’99) continues to work as Internet Operations Manager for LubbockOnline, the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal online edition. He was also chosen as Employee of the Month by the AJ for March 2000.

Srinivas Pogiri (MSCS’98) has been found and is working for Sprint and living in Ft. Worth.

Micky Ray (BSCS’96) has recently opened a consulting company with two other partners. They will specialize in web server back end development, particularly with Java, EJB, and Servlets/JSP. The company website is at www.pgrconsulting.com.

Scott Robertson (BSCS’96) and his wife Kristi announced the birth of their new son. Tyson Hughes Robertson arrived July 28.

Jagat Shah (MSCS’97) tells us that he has his own business Shah Software, Inc., based in Midland, TX. He is currently involved in developing customized software solutions for non-profit agencies.

Josh Vorheis (BSCS’93) is still working at Nortel Networks creating custom long distance software for Sprint Telecommunications.

Jeremy Watkins (BSEECS’97) works for Alcatel Telecom in Richardson, TX as a Technical Staff Member in the Software Development – Digital Cross Connect area.

Lori Woefel (BSCS’96) continues to take Europe by storm, as she is still working for the State Department and stationed in England. She recently spent Thanksgiving in Paris with Dottie Bargas.

Don Young (BSCS’90) wrote to tell us that he is now working for eLoyalty in Austin. His official title is Senior Consultant, but he says he’ll be still testing software.
**Missing Persons**

Yep, they're still missing! If you know where to find anyone on this list, please let us know! We’d hate for anyone to miss getting his or her newsletter!

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