Faculty Feature: Eric Sinzinger

The CS Department continues to grow, and last fall we had 3 new faculty join us, then another in the spring. This semester, I talked to new Assistant Professor Eric Sinzinger, to hear what he has in store for Computer Science at Texas Tech. Eric comes to us from Summus, Ltd. and the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC. He has an extensive background in computer graphics and machine vision, and his current research includes ways to increase the quality of information for images and video. Eric also just received approval to teach a scientific visualization class in the spring of 2001. Scientific visualization provides researchers with an immersive environment that allows for the study of large volumes of data with complex interactions that are hard to discern from strictly raw data. Some examples of use include modeling airflow, turbulence, chemical interactions, and migration patterns. He has already been involved in submitting proposals to the National Science Foundation, and is currently putting together proposals for Intel, NASA and ONR.

When asked what he'd like to see happen in Computer Science, he mentioned an improvement in the CS facilities (actually, he suggested taking over the entire College of Engineering and giving each CS faculty member his or her own building, but realized that might be reaching a little). This includes increased computing resources as well as computing diversity. Eric would also like to further research efforts at Texas Tech. This allows for greater exposure of CS areas for our students, as well as growth in the PhD program. The PhD program is something he is actively working on, as he is serving as Graduate Co-Advisor with Dr. Larry Pyeatt. Eric feels that a good research program helps both undergraduate and graduate education by making the learning process more interactive as well as creating opportunities for individual research and contribution.

Cooke Named Program Manager

Daniel Cooke, chairman of the Department of Computer Science has been appointed to lead a new NASA space initiative that will focus on artificial intelligence and computer science research initiative in coordination with the NASA Ames Research Center in California.

"He has been appointed program manager for the initiative," said Butler Hine, spokesman for the NASA research center.

When asked about his appointment, Cooke said, "I will be working to begin research efforts to fulfill NASA's exploration agenda of the future, using computer science research to develop new software solutions that will help enable human and non-human space travel." Part of Cooke's job will be to promote research efforts to determine better ways of analyzing the large amounts of data that are being collected every day by NASA satellites. He also will work with other labs and universities around the country to promote NASA's needs and also to promote excellence at Tech. This is not the first time Cooke has worked with NASA. "I was involved as a reviewer during the process when NASA Ames Research Center changed its focus from aero research to computer science research a few years ago, and I have been working with NASA on research projects since 1994," he said in a statement released when his appointment was announced. Cooke's new position will run concurrently with his role as chair of Tech's computer science department.
It’s going to be very time-consuming, flying back and forth to California to work with NASA, but it’s very exciting to be involved with leading such an initiative for space travel and exploration,” Cooke said in the statement. “I am thrilled to be doing it.”

Faculty/Staff Bytes

Susan Mengel served as chair of the Conference on Software Engineering Education & Training in March. Under her direction, CSEET&T 2000 had the largest attendance in several years.

Gopal Lakhani has stepped down as Graduate Advisor; Larry Pyeatt & Eric Sinzinger will now serve as Graduate Co-Advisors.

Keri Gleason, Secretary III, has been promoted to Academic Program Assistant. She will be working closely with Dr. Bagert with Undergraduate Advising.


Bharti Temkin was selected as a consultant for the National Library of Medicine’s NGI (Next Generation Internet) project.

Mysti Digby, Business Manager, was one of 30 Texas Tech staff members chosen to receive a Quality Service Award in March.

Noe Lopez-Benitez will be joining the Numerical Aerospace Simulation division of NASA for the summer. He has been assigned to the Parallel tools group. He also presented a paper at CNDS 2000 in January entitled “Fast Generation of Minimal File Spanning Trees.”

Eric Acosta, TA, received a “Best Student Paper Award – Honorable Mention” for the paper he and Bryan Stephens presented at the 12 IEEE Symposium on Computer-Based Medical Systems at the University of Connecticut last June. Their paper was entitled “Development of a Haptic Virtual Environment.”

14th Annual ACM Banquet

Whew! It’s hard to believe that banquet time has come and gone already. This year’s banquet was held at the Holiday Inn Park Plaza Hotel on April 21. Mike Shelton, of Raytheon, returned to Lubbock to be our keynote speaker this year. Mike gave an interesting talk on the difference between life at Texas Tech University, and life in the “real world.”

After Mike’s talk, we were treated to an original video presentation produced by CS students Omar Belazi, William Braswell, and Jason Ostermann, showing us their own unique take on the Computer Science faculty and staff. Let’s just say you haven’t truly appreciated the humor of the Hamster Dance until you’ve seen it done by the CS faculty & staff!!

Since Dr. Cooke was off being a NASA bigwig (see front page of newsletter) the week of the banquet, Associate Chair Don Bagert stepped in to announce our top students and the departmental scholarships. Dr. & Mrs. Weiner were also able to join us to announce this year’s recipient of the Weiner Scholarship in Computer Science. Bob Flanagan, outgoing president of ACM, served as the evening’s MC, and announced the ACM awards – ACM Scholarship (William Braswell), Outstanding Graduating Senior (Dwayne Isbell) and Outstanding Faculty (Donald Bagert). We were also very pleased to have Rick Butler (BSCS’86) from Raytheon attending this year’s festivities.

Due to corporate donations from Sprint, Dow Chemical, and Raytheon, ACM was able to offer reduced price tickets to the banquet this year. This resulted in a great turnout for the banquet, despite it being held on Good Friday. As usual, a fun time had by all, and we hope you can make next year!

Other Scholarship Recipients:

Alumni Scholarship - Rishi Master
Exxon Scholarships - Tuan Nguyen
Terry Myers Scholarship - Jason Ostermann
Outreach Scholarship - Joseph Wigner
SPACE Scholarship - Christina Anaya
Weiner Scholarship - Richard Garcia
South Plains API - Erhan Onal

Weiner Scholarship - Erhan Onal
South Plains API - Charles Bohn
Alumni Updates

Chris Brawley (BSCS95) and his wife Sabrina are living in Ft. Worth where Chris is a software engineer with Ibertech, Inc. Last July they welcomed their first child, Brittany Allison.

Amy (Clark) Cooper (BSCS90) and her husband Patrick welcomed their first child this spring. Niall Harlan arrived 3/28/00. Congratulations!

Stuart Doughty (BSCS84) wrote to tell us that he has relocated to Matthews, NC.

Prem Ganganakunta (MSCS95) is working for I2 Technologies in Irving, TX.

Zahir Haque (MSCS97) is living and working in Richardson, TX.

Reagan Johnson (BSCS98) is working as a Web Developer for DrKoop.com in Austin, TX.

Miguel Luque (BSCS91) emailed to let us know that he received his MBA in 1994, received his MCSE in 1995 and returned to the US in 1996. Now he is a Trainer Manager for Florida at Knowledge Alliance.

Paul McCombs (BSCS92) and his wife Robbie had their first child in January. Timothy Scott arrived 3/11/00. More congratulations!

Shobhna Nihalani (MSCS97), along with her husband Vinay, had her first child. Ashvin joined the family on 10/19/99. Even more congrats!

Marcos Palacios (MSCS88PhD93) wrote to tell us that he is working for BMC Software in Austin in the area of Software Process Models & Quality Assurance. He recently presented a seminar on “Software Quality Assurance in the Capability Maturity Model” at the BMC QA conference, as well as completed the requirements for and obtained the title of Certified Software Quality Engineer.

Ram Ramachandran (MSCS91) recently joined Fisher-Rosemount Systems as a Software Development Manager, and is primarily responsible for development of real-time embedded software. He and his wife Viji have an 8 yr old son named Kapil.

Russell Smith (BSCS96) is working for a company in Austin that writes banking software.

David Tannen (BSCS84) tells us that he is the project leader for the Tartan Ada Development System product line for DDC-I in Phoenix, AZ. He and his wife Trudy are the proud parents of 2 children.

Brian Veale (BSCS97MS99) works for Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio as a Research Analyst for the Training Systems & Simulation division.

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 their newsletter!

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Thank you!!!!
We’d like to thank all of our donors over the last year. Your gifts truly make a difference for Computer Science!

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If you’re interested in contributing to the Computer Science Department, please contact either Daniel Cooke at Dcooke@coe.ttu.edu or Mysti Digby at Mysti.Digby@coe.ttu.edu. Or call  

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**Alumni Update Form**

Name:_________________________ Degree__________ Year:___ Email:_______________________________

Address:________________________ City:__________________ State:_____ ZIP:___________ Phone:__________________________

Company:__________________________ Job Title:________________________

Work Address:__________________________

Work Phone:________________________ Work Email:__________________________

Comments:__________________________________________________________________________

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