Faculty Feature: A Q&A with Noe Lopez-Benitez

What have you enjoyed most during your time here at TTU?

This is an easy question to address. I can say with certainty that relating to students through teaching and/or research activities has brought me a lot of satisfaction. Interacting with students is a learning experience that goes both ways. I feel that I can share experience and knowledge, and in return, I gain also experience and knowledge, and very often I gain education as well. One thing I treasure, which I consider invaluable and humbling, is the opportunity of shaping somebody’s professional life hopefully for the better. Tell us about your research - what you’re doing, and who you’re working with.

Current research efforts have led to the revamping of the Distributed Computing Lab. A lot of good things are happening right now in that lab that keep many people busy. Among these people, there are about 10 graduate students working with Dr. Alan Sill from High Energy Physics in the Physics Dept., for Dr. Phil Smith, director of the High Performance Computing Center, with Dr. Per Andersen, and with me. Other professors are indirectly involved with research activities in the lab. One of the most visible projects involves the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) as we are concluding the replication of the Data Release 1 (DR1) at TTU. As a mirror site of DR1, the department will be able to offer excellent research opportunities in managing large databases, partitioning issues, and parallel image rendering procedures involving cluster computing, and distributed scientific applications suitable for grid-based platforms. Similar opportunities are offered by the CDF/SAM project under Dr. Sill. This project involves

Faculty Bytes

Marcello Balduccini presented a paper entitled “USA-SMART: Improving the Quality of Plans in Answer Set Planning” at the International Conference on Applications of Declarative Languages in Dallas, TX. He also presented another paper co-authored by Veena Mellarkod at the 10th International Workshop on Non-Monotonic Reasoning in Whistler, Canada entitled “CR-Prolog with Ordered Disjunction.”

Eric Sinzinger’s paper with Larry Pyeatt, Brett Moore and Todd Quasny, “Intelligent Control of Closed-Loop Sedation in Simulated ICU Patients,” was given the First Place Best Paper Award overall at FLAIRS 2004. Even Edward Feigenbaum, one (cont. on pg. 2)
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!

$100 – 999

Carrie Gonzalez
Billy & Joy Huber
James Ries
David Seese
Selliah Rathnam
Diane Sherer
Troy Smith

$20—99

Darrell Batemen
Greg Buxkemper
Kevin Carlson
Reyhan Crider
Scott Glover
Subramanian Ramesh
Kelly Redding
John Reed
Dale Sanders
James Spires
David Stevens
Robert Thorpe

Abilene Site Update

Abilene graduated its first class of graduate students in May, awarding two degrees in software engineering and two in computer science.

Todd Quasny, a graduate student from the program in Lubbock, came to Abilene in the spring and offered a special topics course on robotics which was well received. Work on a new robotics test platform, Albert, continues. Albert is now mobile, and capable of receiving instructions through a wireless network.

The search for a new senior faculty member to fill the opening in Abilene is ongoing.

Lopez-Benitez cont.

the implementation of a grid-based distributed service available to physicists around the world to design experiments requiring and generating data, and for which, queries to a large database located at the Fermilab must be satisfied on timely bases. Other projects involve parallelization of millions of differential equation solvers for Computational Fluid Dynamics applications. Such solvers are intended (among other applications) to simulate flow and turbulence in NASA’s huge wind tunnels. Check the DC Lab link in the department’s website for more information on these and other projects, people involved, and publications generated.

How do you find time to balance teaching a full course load every semester with your research?

I am not very good in finding a good balance and my students in the lab know very well about this. I am currently teaching one graduate and one undergraduate course. Another activity that is highly time consuming is writing the book for CS 2350 - a course that I’ve been teaching for 10 years. I think that our own book is long overdue. The involvement of other professors in the lab has been very helpful in supervising and directing thesis and writing grant proposals. Students also know that because of time constraints, they are challenged to be aggressive, and exercise initiative on the projects they choose to work on. These projects are discussed during periodic meetings held by the group.

If you could be any computer language in the world, which one would you be? And why?

I am not that dedicated to CS. Although I can hardly speak English, and probably because of it, it is human languages that catch my interest. In this regard, Spanish (my native language) tops the list. But if I can’t avoid a direct answer then I would say, being a systems person, a fully satisfying computer programming language has not yet been invented. Dr. Cooke claims to be working on it.

Dr. Lopez-Benitez can be reached at nlb@cs.ttu.edu.
GRADUATE RECOGNITION

The following students were the recipients of scholarships for the 2003-2004 academic year. Congratulations to our outstanding graduate students.

Thimmaya Ame
Jorge Baquero
Dan Beatty
Melissa Bell
Maximillian Berger
Saurabh Bhatla
Jarred Blount
Justin Blount
Karem Brieno
Vijay Cheleenahalli
Vijay Chellenhali
Nianen Chen
Naveen Chikoti
Soma Datta
Zhipeng Gong
Chaitanya Gorugontula
Vamsi Gudimetla
Karan Gupta
Hamideh Hassouneh
Sharath Hedge
Jianyong Huang
Arun Jesubatham
Vivek Khurana

Amit Kulkarni
Dan Lu
Xiao Ma
Shivaji Marisarla
Kiran Masapari
Elizabeth Morris
Desikan Mukudam
Rajkumar Murthy
Ruihua Niu
Erhan Onal
Parag Pandit
Fernando Paniagua
Rama Krishna Pathangi
Ratheesh Raghavan
Abhijit Rai
Nitin Ramannavar
Santhosh Swaminathan
Shridhar Upadhyaya
Sreeram Vaidyanath
Greg Wagner
Lei Wu
Jianjun Zheng

Undergraduate Scholarship Awards

The following undergrads were selected to receive scholarships for the 2004—2005 Academic year.

ACM - Kapil Prakesh
Alumni - Davenia Crenshaw
ExxonMobile - Wesley Weisheit
Terry G Myers - Ann Lowell
Robert Beckinger
Outreach - William McSpadden
Terry Osmulski - Jonathan Wheeler
Phillips - Micaiah Fitzgerald
Raytheon - Bradley Null

Also - the College of Engineering awarded the following scholarships to CS students for this upcoming academic year:

Litton—Jennifer Brewer
Mose Newman - Garrett Richards

Congrats to these standout students!

Alumni Updates

Kevin Autrey (BSCS86) writes “laid off from Ericsson in Feb after 13 years. Who’d have thunk the job market for Software Engineers would ever be so horrible?! Enjoying the time off though - gearing up to start my own Home Inspection business (try to ship *that* off to India)! - trying to determine if it’s time to take my stab at writing The Great American Novel & just returned from a vacation in the Grand Canyon - hiked into the canyon and back out. Overall, life is really pretty great. Well, except for the prospect of turning 40 in just over a month - I keep telling myself that it beats the only reasonable alternative we each have - but it turns out that’s only small comfort.”

Manish Bhatia (BSCS93) moved back to the United Arab Emirates in 1997. He is running a software development business there, developing internet and wireless applications.

Ja-Young Hyon (MSCS98) has been working for Sabre Holdings in Dallas since graduation. She is now a senior software developer.

Sudhee Subrahmanya (MSCS92) is now in Round Rock, TX.

James Ries (BSCS97) tells us that he is now working for Alcatel as a Product Manager for Network Management Software for Optical Network Division. “I started in software development for Alcatel and moved into Product Management in 2001 for Metro Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) products for North America. In November of last year I transitioned into product management for Network Management Software. Two of my former managers have been Tech CS grads: Mark Workman and Mike Soulakis.” He is now married to the former Texas Tech 93-96 Volleyball standout, Courtney Thames. They have a 14 month old daughter, Ashley, and she can already clap to the Tech Fight Song!
**Personal Information Update**

Please check preferred mailing address: ( ) Home ( ) Business

Name: __________________________________________ (Please correct mailing label if necessary.)
Home: __________________________________________ Home Phone: ( )
Address: ________________________________________ Work Phone: ( )
_________________________________________________ Email:
Position/Title: _________________________________ Company Name: ___________________________
Company Address: ________________________________________________________________

We’d love to hear from you - let us know what’s going on with you these days!

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**Missing Persons**

We've found a few, but these are 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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<td>Donna Wilson Kreidler</td>
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