On July 1st Dr. Yi Deng started in his new position as Dean of the College of Computing and Informatics (CCI). Dr. Deng comes to the College from Florida International University (FIU) where he served as Dean of the School of Computing & Information Sciences. FIU is a comprehensive Carnegie Research University in the High Research Activity Category and one of the fastest growing and largest public research universities in the U.S.

“I have no doubt that the University is well on its way to become a leader of higher education, not only in the State of North Carolina, but also nationally and internationally,” said Dr. Deng. “We are at an exciting time for the field of computing and informatics, which is not only a fertile ground for innovation, but also a key growth driver for every other discipline and industry. CCI is well positioned to play these dual roles.”

Dr. William Ribarsky is the new Chair of the Department of Computer Science. Dr. Ribarsky is the Bank of America Endowed Chair in Information Technology at UNC Charlotte and the founding director of the Charlotte Visualization Center. He served as the Interim Chair of the Department for the last year. “I’m thrilled about this opportunity,” said Dr. Ribarsky. “This is an incredibly exciting time to be a part of the College and to lead the Department of Computer Science. The curriculum that we now offer our students is producing the best graduates to meet the 21st Century challenges in computing. We also have the opportunity to take a leadership position in several important areas of research.”

The College of Computing and Informatics and the College of Health and Human Services are collaborating on a groundbreaking curriculum, which will train students to meet the 21st Century needs of the healthcare industry. Beginning in the Fall of 2009 a graduate degree certificate in Health Information Technology (HIT) will be offered. A Professional Science Master’s degree in HIT will soon be offered.

20 students from the Central Academy of Technology and Arts in Union County recently toured Woodward Hall. These students had expressed an eagerness to learn more about CCI and possible career opportunities in Computer Science and Software and Information Systems following a series of presentations by CCI staff and students at their school. After the tour many indicated that UNC Charlotte’s College of Computing and Informatics will be a definite option for them after graduation.

CCI recently hosted two, week long summer camps in conjunction with the University’s Camps on Campus. Dr. Tiffany Barnes and her students introduced campers to Culturally-Situated Design Tools.
“Electronic medical records are coming,” said Larry Mays, Ph.D., Department Chair of Bioinformatics and Genomics. “The ‘American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009’ calls for $19B in expenditures to help with the computerization of health records by 2014. Estimates are that it will take at least 200,000 new health informatics support specialists to make this happen. UNC Charlotte will be a leader in preparing students for what certainly will be one of the most important jobs for the healthcare community.”

The conversion to electronic medical records will improve healthcare quality; prevent medical errors; reduce healthcare costs; increase administrative efficiencies; decrease paperwork; and expand access to affordable care.

>> The College of Computing and Informatics (CCI) recently hosted its inaugural Emerging Issues in Information Technology series on the UNC Charlotte campus. Software as a Service was the first topic for the conference series. An outstanding group of speakers, representing such companies as IBM, Microsoft, Peak 10, and TIAA-CREF, was assembled for this inaugural conference. The College plans to make the Emerging Issues in Information Technology series an annual event.

>> Three faculty members from the College of Computing and Informatics have received prestigious awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Dr. Tiffany Barnes, Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science, received a National Science Foundation (NSF) Career Award. Dr. Barnes was recognized for her research on “Educational Data Mining for Student Support in Interactive Learning Environments” and will receive $646,982 over the course of five years. Creating intelligent learning technologies from data has unique potential to transform the American educational system, by building a low cost way to adapt learning environments to individual students, while advancing research on human learning.

Dr. Jun-tao Guo, an Assistant Professor with the Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics, has also received a National Science Foundation (NSF) Career Award. Dr. Guo, will receive $765,392 for his research on “A Structure-Based Approach to Transcription Factor-Binding Site Prediction via Protein-DNA Docking.” The goal of the proposed project is to develop computational methods and resources for genomic scale prediction of transcription factor (TF) binding sites through modeling protein-DNA interactions.

Dr. Celine Latulipe, Assistant Professor in the Department of Software and Information Systems has been awarded a NSF CreativeIT grant. Dr. Latulipe will receive $762,372 for her project, “Dance.Draw: Embodiment as Input for Collaborative, Creative Expression.” The project will explore ways to allow dancers to create information with their movements in real-time and study how to involve the audience in the interaction loop. Dr. Latulipe will serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project and will be assisted by Dr. David Wilson, Associate Professor in the Department of Software and Information Systems, and Professor Sybil Huskey in the Department of Dance and Theatre.