The College of Computing and Informatics’ (CCI) Department of Computer Science (CS) has introduced a new curriculum to better prepare its students for the global computing and IT workforce that is currently undergoing dramatic change. Under the new curriculum, Computer Science has streamlined core requirements for the BS and BA degrees and made focus areas available to students. This ensures that CCI graduates have in-depth knowledge in an area of computer science that they select, in addition to the core computer science knowledge. The paths include intelligent systems, game design and development, graphics and visualization, computing systems, and networking and distributed computing. For the BA, CS core requirements are made more compact, creating room for a second focus area in another discipline, which approximates a minor in that area. This provides BA students a potential extra career edge in having knowledge and skills in computer science plus a complementary discipline, such as business, cognitive science, biology, or any other to which computing applies.

For the second time in four years, a team of students from UNC Charlotte’s College of Computing and Informatics’ (CCI) Department of Software and Information Systems (SIS) have won the Southeastern Region Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition. Among those competing were the reigning regional champions from the University of Louisville, Kennesaw State University, Mercer University, and Northern Kentucky University.

The cyber defense competition allows teams of college students to apply their information assurance and information technology education in a competitive environment. The competitions are unique because they focus on business operations and incorporate the operational aspect of managing and protecting an existing network infrastructure.

In 2006, another team of students from SIS won the first ever National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition.

>> UNC Charlotte’s College of Computing and Informatics recently hosted a National Science Foundation (NSF) Event at the Charlotte Center City Hilton. The event, “Broadening Participation in Computing (BPC) Community Meeting” provided a forum for people to find out about the efforts currently funded by the NSF BPC program in the hopes of building new collaborations and synergies. The NSF BPC program aims to significantly increase the number of U.S. citizens receiving post secondary degrees in the computing disciplines.

“This was an honor and a privilege for CCI to be able to host this event,” said Teresa Dahlberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Computer Science and founding Director of the Diversity in Computing.
Defense Competition (NCCDC), which is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. The NCCDC this year will be held on April 17-19 on the University of Texas at San Antonio campus.

>> Dr. Zbigniew W. Ras, a full professor of computer science who has taught at UNC Charlotte since 1979, is the recipient of the 2009 Harshini V. de Silva Graduate Mentor Award. He was presented with the award at a reception on the evening of Feb. 16.

As his students and colleagues have attested, Ras is a life mentor who challenges, encourages, and supports students in their academic and professional pursuits. In many instances, the mentoring relationships continue on long after students are employed in their respective fields.

>> The College of Computing and Informatics would like to recognize our partners in the Business Affiliates Program.

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>> The College of Computing and Informatics’ Full Professor Jing Xiao is one of several distinguished authors from around the world to be honored for their work on the “Springer Handbook of Robotics”. The book recently received two PROSE Awards presented by the American Association of Publishers, Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division. Less than nine months after its publication, the Handbook was recognized with the PROSE Award in the Engineering & Technology Category, as well as with the Award for Excellence in the overall Physical Sciences & Mathematics Category.

>> The College of Computing and Informatics’ Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics is participating in an exciting new collaborative research project with BioCytics out of Huntersville, North Carolina. This collaboration will develop methods for the molecular analysis of circulating tumor cells (CTCs). CTCs are cells that have “broken away” from a solid tumor and travel through the patient’s bloodstream. Although CTCs are a rare cell type, they can be isolated and analyzed to reveal details on the growth or regression of these tumors. This information then aids the physician in determining the best treatment course for the patient.

“This is groundbreaking research,” said Larry Mays, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics. “Through this work customized medication will be developed by pharmaceutical companies for cancer patients. Ultimately this research will begin the march toward treating the patient rather than simply the disease.”

Specifically, BioCytics’ Chief Scientific Officer, Bryan Greene, Ph.D., is working closely with the Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics Microarray Facility Director, Joshua Newton, to look further at genetic tests for cancer patients. By running tests, which reveal the presence or absence of genetic “biomarkers”, therapy can be best tailored to the patient. This work will ultimately lead to more precise treatments and hopefully better overall outcomes.

Information Technology Institute (DITI). Over 200 individuals, primarily university and college faculty, who have or hope to obtain funding for the BPC efforts attended the event. This list also included high school teachers, college students, and individuals from the non-profit sector, making for the perfect setting for all of these individuals to share their ideas and experiences.

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>> Mark Your Calendars

April 21st> Software as a Service Conference  Register

April 29th> CCI Awards Luncheon  Register

May 1st> Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics Health Information Technology Retreat  Register

May 9th> Spring Commencement