Welcome to all new and returning CSRC members for the 2011/2012 academic year! Summer in Blacksburg is beautiful and brings with it our newest Hokies for summer orientation.

The spring semester of 2011 saw another increase in membership to the CSRC. We were pleased to have so many new companies with us! At our spring CSRC events, we welcomed back Bloomberg and Cisco, as well as new members Cyber Point Int'l, Datran Media, Decisive Analytics, HomeAway and Sphere of Influence. Several companies have already enrolled as new members for the 2011/2012 year: Assured Information Systems, Deloitte, MITRE, the NSA, Near Infinity, Tata Consultancy Services, and Tridium.

At our spring business meeting, I discussed the possibility of a change in the dues structure. The change was implemented and starts July 1 with all new memberships and renewals. This change will help us to keep providing quality programs and to recognize companies who were already going above and beyond, while helping us to better serve our students. As this newsletter is being written, the department is making scholarship decisions. All CSRC dues go towards helping us recognize and reward the hard work of our many outstanding students. Companies attending our fall luncheon will have a chance to meet a good number of those scholarship winners!

What’s New with the CSRC

Daniel Curaca-Malito speaks with the representatives from Google

New Sophomore Seminar—Benefits for the CSRC

Starting this coming fall semester, the department will be offering a new one-credit seminar to sophomore CS majors. The goal of CS 1944 is to help students succeed as computer science majors and to encourage them to begin taking meaningful steps towards their future careers. The motivation for the seminar came from discussions with students, alumni, and CSRC representatives. Topics that frequently came up in these discussions include: an overview of the computer science curriculum and the computing field, so that students can better plan their CS upper level electives; an earlier awareness of dynamic emerging trends and technologies in computing, to help students get excited about the field; an early understanding of the value of interacting with companies at job fairs, of pursuing internships as early as possible, and of interacting professionally with potential employers; and early advice from seniors, alums, and employers — so that “what I wish I knew” becomes “what I’m glad I knew.”

Students enrolled in the CS 1944 class are required to attend the CSRC Career Fair. Premier members can also schedule information sessions during the evening times associated with the seminar, since students will be required to attend a certain number of evening events scheduled during that time slot. Check with Libby Bradford for more details and available dates.
For the fourth straight year, the CS Department and the CSRC will be academic underwriters of the annual Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing. CS@VT was well represented by thirty-one students at last year’s conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This year, the gold sponsorship status provides a 20% discount to all students attending the conference from CS@VT. The department will be encouraging new students, either at the graduate or undergraduate level, to attend the conference. We are pleased to be able to continue supporting an activity that provides networking and career opportunities to the young women of the CS Department. Our most sincere thanks to both Freddie Mac and Northrop Grumman for providing additional travel funding for this very important event.

AWC held its annual Women in Computing Day event on April 15, 2011. This event, which is in its 13th year, invites middle school girls to come to campus to learn about computing and technology. This year, AWC is pleased to report that they hosted 85 girls for the event! This year, the girls enjoyed a variety of sessions covering a wide-range of topics, including cryptography, modeling/simulations, and systems and networking. They also visited and had a chance to try out some of the equipment in the Human Computer Interaction Black Lab which houses the gigapixel display.

Successful Women in Computing Day

Special thanks to Google and Lockheed Martin, who were the primary sponsors of this event. The CSRC also provided additional funding to purchase flash drives for the girls. Each girl received a CS@VT flash drive with computer science activities to take home with her, in an effort to help keep her interested in technology.

CSRC and CS Department Sponsor Grace Hopper Conference

On Saturday, May 14, the Virginia Tech College of Engineering conferred degrees on the class of 2011, including approximately 60 Computer Science undergraduate students. Graduate degrees were conferred at the Graduate Commencement Ceremony on Friday, May 13. On Friday evening, Computer Science graduates, their guests and families, enjoyed a reception in the Torgersen Museum. Several students were recognized for outstanding achievements and contributions, including Ben Reid and Andrew Street for undergraduate academic achievement, Kristin Whetstone for service to the department, and Elizabeth Timmons as the Outstanding CS Senior. Three graduate students were also recognized: Shaimaa Lazem for outstanding teaching, Mayank Daga as the outstanding Master’s student and Dong Li as the outstanding doctoral student. Both Michael Lapping and TC Jones were awarded the George Gorsline Memorial Scholarship Award, given each year to a rising senior who has made the most significant rebound from his freshman year.

The CS Department is proud to have had two of only three students graduating with a 4.0 GPA, which is considered “first in class” in the College of Engineering.

Spring Commencement Ceremonies
Four CS Students Inducted into Phi Beta Kappa

On Friday, May 13, Virginia Tech’s Mu Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa held its Spring 2011 initiation ceremony in McBryde 100. According to their official web site, PBK was founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776 and is the nation’s oldest and most widely known academic honor society. Among the Spring 2011 initiates were four Computer Science majors: Barry Bragg, Jeffrey Jankowski, Kyle Morgan, and Elizabeth Timmons. Kyle Morgan was unable to attend the initiation ceremony.

CS Student to Attend Google FUSE Program

Rising computer science sophomore, Sloane Neidig, was selected to participate in the Google FUSE program. Google FUSE brings up to 50 aspiring computer science students for an all-expenses paid retreat at their New York, NY offices in mid-July. According to the Google FUSE website, the program aims to:

- Form a network among top young students from underrepresented backgrounds in computer science that will allow them to learn about research, academic, and industry opportunities in the years to come.
- Make connections between students and Googlers that will allow students to discover career paths, create meaningful academic experiences, and take advantage of the college years in computer science.
- Give students an insight into the diverse and exciting careers in computer science and show how rewarding, challenging, and fun they can be.

Congratulations to Sloane!

CS Capstone Class Engages Tech Companies for Enhancing Educational Experience

Spring 2011 saw the successful completion of a new Systems & Networking Capstone class (CS 4284), the main goal of which is to impart a hands-on project development experience to the students. The class requires students to apply various CS concepts they have learned through the years to tackle a semester-long project involving problems of practical importance. The students also gain useful experience of working in larger teams, organizing and presenting their findings, and designing and developing innovative solutions to previously unexplored issues.

Dr. Ali R. Butt taught the first offering of the course, which comprised 14 students. Instead of relying on in-home projects, the class reached out to CSRC companies, Rackspace Inc. and Booz Allen Hamilton, to identify practical problems that would not only help the students better understand the CS concepts, but also develop solutions that can be adopted in real life.

The class was a great success, with students gaining useful industry experience. Moreover, two of the three groups earned top “Industry Choice Awards” at the recent VTURCS Undergraduate Research Symposium.
CS Senior, John Ryding, Wins C.T. Tate Distinguished Co-op Award

For a third straight year, a computer science student has been awarded the prestigious C.T. Tate Distinguished Co-Op Award. On May 5, 2011, graduating senior John Ryding was awarded the C.T. Tate Distinguished Co-Op Award. To be eligible for the C.T. Tate Award, a student must have completed at least three co-op terms and earned distinction through academic, extracurricular, and professional achievements.

John was a co-op for IBM, in the positions of IES developer and software engineer. Bill Higgins, Senior Software Architect for the IBM Tivoli CTO Team, recommended John for the award and was on hand to help recognize John's achievements. According to Bill, "John has not only made solid contributions to the Rational Jazz project, he has become a top contributor, which is unheard of for a co-op. John is the most talented person of his age I have ever met in terms of technical capability, passion for his work, and ability to work in a team setting. Over the course of John's time as a co-op, he's met and exceeded these early high expectations. He's made regular significant contributions to the Jazz.net web site and more importantly to the core Jazz Platform code base. John has essentially taken on ownership of the UI code for a significant new strategic web application and is delivering on time with high-quality. I have always been a star at IBM but John is substantially farther ahead than I was at a similar age. I know he is going to be a leader in the IT industry and I feel very fortunate that we made an early connection via Steve [Choquette] and his co-op with us. I can't wait to begin to work with him full-time when he graduates."

Bill Higgins was also the guest speaker at the Co-Op Recognition Ceremony and Recep-

CSRC Helps CS Senior Participate in Linux Orchestra World Tour

Andrew Street, a graduating CS senior, was unable to attend his college commencement ceremony because he was on a world tour with the Virginia Tech Linux Laptop Orchestra! According to Andy, the group was formed two years ago, from a diverse group of students with majors in math, biology, political science, and computer science. The students “embarked on an ambitious journey to explore the evolving field of computer music. Led by Professor Ivica Ico Bukvic, we founded the Linux Laptop Orchestra (L2Ork) using wii-motes, netbooks, and speakers made in-house. While the concept of a laptop orchestra wasn’t unheard of (VT was the third university to found one, after Stanford and Princeton), L2Ork aimed to emphasize the performance aspect, with scores actually being played out live using wiimotes like some sort of prototypical conductor’s wand as opposed to furious typing and clicking. L2Ork also sought out to prove that all of this could be done using commodity hardware, with complete stations costing less than the price of a single station’s speaker in comparative orchestras.”

From May 13 through June 1st, L2Ork toured Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Croatia.

Upsilon Pi Epsilon Inducts New Members

On Thursday, April 28, 2011, Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE) held its 55th induction ceremony. UPE inducted thirty-one new members to their VT chapter during the 2010/2011 academic year.

Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE) is the first and only international honor society for the computing sciences. The UPE Alpha Chapter of Virginia was chartered at Virginia Tech in 1975.

The CSRC continues to provide $1000 of support per academic year to help subsidize membership fees for new inductees.
Computer Science undergraduate enrollments continue to grow. The latest enrollment report of students in the major shows 375 students after May graduation. At this time last year, there were 331 students listed as a CS majors. We are also seeing an increase in the percentage of women in the program, from 7.89% last year to 8.8% this year. As mentioned in a CSRC mailing, we experienced another increase in our number of undergraduate scholarship applications. With a combination of College of Engineering, Computer Science endowed scholarships, and additional funding from the CSRC, the CS Department was able to award a scholarship to every student who applied, who was also making sufficient progress in the CS degree, and had an overall GPA of at least 2.7. To make this possible, the CSRC added over $70,000 to the available funds for scholarships. Your CSRC dues makes this possible!

CSRC Continues Support for REU and C-Tech^2

The CSRC is proud to continue supporting two Virginia Tech activities. For a third straight year, the CSRC has provided support to the VT Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU). The REU programs gives students from other universities an opportunity to spend eight weeks at Virginia Tech to work on a variety of projects with multiple faculty members. In turn, CS@VT hopes to see many of these students return for graduate studies in the future.

For the fourth year, the CSRC will sponsor an etiquette dinner for young women attending the “Computers and Technology at Virginia Tech” camp (C-Tech^2). During the etiquette dinner, members of the CS Department have an opportunity to speak with the campers and encourage them to pursue computer science in college.

CS is Gold Sponsor of the Richard Tapia Conference

The CS Department was proud to send nine students to the 2011 Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing Conference, held April 3—5, 2011 in San Francisco. Thanks to generous donations from Freddie Mac and the CSRC, the department was able to sponsor six students’ attendance. An additional three students received scholarships directly from the Tapia Conference. According to the conference website, the “Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing has served as a leading forum for bringing together students, professors and professionals to discuss and strengthen their passion and commitment to computing.”

Pictured (clockwise from top left): Olivia Erickson, Sherley Codio, Jeremy Barksdale, Gregory Wilson, Eric Fouh, Dr. Manuel Perez, Ashley Robinson, Shaimaa Lazem, Samah Gad, and Elizabeth Timmons.
VTURCS Holds 10th Annual Spring Symposium

On Wednesday, April 27, the Computer Science Department held its 10th annual VTURCS Spring Research Symposium. Virginia Tech Undergraduate Research in Computer Science (VTURCS) encourages Computer Science undergraduate students to become involved in research. This year’s symposium featured twelve projects from 26 students, including three capstone projects from the CS 4284 Systems and Networking Capstone course.

The organizers of VTURCS wish to thank all of the judges, including faculty Dr. Barbara Ryder, Dr. Cal Ribbens, Dr. Andrea Kavanaugh, and Professor Dwight Barnette, and industry representatives Jay Winkeler (Lockheed Martin), Brian Hartsock (Rackspace), Peter Arapov (CSC), Jonathan Gill (Cisco) and Rosie Hall (Cisco).

All participants received a bag of CSRC items to take home. The VTURCS organizers thanked CGI, General Dynamics, Google, Intel, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman for sending items specifically for this event.

Awards were presented in three categories (advisor in parenthesis):

Faculty Choice Awards:
1. Kyle Morgan, “Multi-threaded Execution of Javascript Tasks in V8!” (Dr. Godmar Back)
2. Eeshan Shah, “Androider: Automated Translation of GUIs from the Desktop to Smart Phones” (Dr. Eli Tilevich)
3. Weston Thayer and George Zhang, “Going Green with Android” (Dr. Scott McCrickard and Dr. Michael Evans)

Industry Choice Awards:
1. James Cook, Michael Lowman, Kyle Morgan, and Conor Scott, “Implementing Enterprise-level Quality of Service Using Variable Resource Allocation in the Xen 4 Hypervisor” (Dr. Ali Butt)
2. Brett Jones, Scott Luxenberg, David McGrath, Paul Trampton, and Johnathan Weldon, “RabbitMQ Performance and Scalability Analysis” (Dr. Ali Butt)
3. Kyle Morgan, “Multi-threaded Execution of Javascript Tasks in V8!” (Dr. Godmar Back)

People’s Choice Awards:
1. Eeshan Shah, “Androider: Automated Translation of GUIs from the Desktop to Smart Phones” (Dr. Eli Tilevich)
2. Casey Link, “Towards a Cyber Game System to Study User Behavior and Privacy Leakage” (Dr. Danfeng Yao)
3. Three-way tie for third place: Kyle Morgan, “Multi-threaded Execution of Javascript Tasks in V8!” (Dr. Godmar Back), and Weston Thayer and George Zhang, “Going Green with Android” (Dr. Scott McCrickard and Dr. Michael Evans), and Chase Carroll, DeMarcus Townsend and Jacob George, “Multitouch Applications for Collaborative Education” (Dr. Scott McCrickard and Dr. Francis Quek)

Information Overload Study - Request from CS grad student

This is from a graduate student, Blake Sawyer, who is working with Professor Francis Quek on ways to better handle information overload.

Here is Blake’s request:

Are you a person who deals with a lot of information on a daily basis? Are you looking for a new way to manage your personal information space? The Center for Human-Computer Interaction (CHCI) at VT is currently researching personal information management systems. We are developing a tool that automatically tags your documents based on the people and groups you collaborate with and we plan to deploy this application within a real world setting. We are recruiting participants (and groups of participants) who are running Mac OS X to run our application for a period of 4-weeks while we collect some anonymous data. For more information, please contact Blake Sawyer (basawyer@vt.edu).
Dr. Wenjing Lou joins CS Faculty

Dr. Wenjing Lou will be joining our Northern Virginia Center faculty in August 2011. Her research focus is in the area of cybersecurity.

Dr. Lou earned her doctoral degree in electrical and computer engineering at the University of Florida in 2003. Since then, she has been a faculty member in the ECE Department of Worcester Polytechnic Institute where she has graduated three doctoral students, all of whom won awards for their dissertations from either her home department or from the Sigma Xi chapter at WPI.

She was named the Joseph Samuel Satin Distinguished Fellow at WPI in 2006-7 in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments and promising future. She is the recipient of an NSF CAREER Award (2008) and the WPI Sigma Xi Outstanding Junior Faculty Researcher Award (2009). Her current research interests include data security and privacy in cloud computing and e-healthcare systems, and security in mobile and wireless networks.

She serves as an editor of several journals, including IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications and IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid. She has actively participated on many technical programs and organizing committees of conferences in her field.

We welcome Dr. Lou!

Dr. T.M. Murali is the PI on NIH Award

Congratulations to Dr. T.M. Murali, along with Dr. John Tyson, Biological Sciences, and Dr. Jean Peccoud, Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, on their new NIH R01 award entitled “Integrating Top-Down and Bottom-Up Models in Systems Biology with Application to Cell Cycle Control in Budding Yeast.”

Dr. Murali describes the project: “[t]wo distinct approaches are being used to study complex cellular systems. The first, top-down approach automatically analyzes large-scale datasets for correlations between genes and proteins. The second, bottom-up approach painstakingly crafts detailed models that can be simulated by computer. These approaches have largely been developed separately until now. This project will meld these two approaches into a single framework, thereby allowing data-driven analysis to augment models that can be simulated. The project will develop a system for hypothesis generation, testing, and validation to be applied to the mechanism of cell division in budding yeast. In the long term, the methods developed by this project can be used to study any complex cellular system, e.g., those involved in the development of cancer and in infectious diseases.”

Dr. Naren Ramakrishnan Receives Alumni Award

The Alumni Award for Excellence in Research is given annually to, at most, two VT faculty members who have made outstanding contributions in the area of research. There is at most one winner from any college in a given year. Dr. Ramakrishnan was recognized for his work in data mining in diverse areas such as intelligence analysis, systems biology, sustainability, and recommender systems.

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Dr. Ali Butt Receives a NetApp Faculty Fellowship

Dr. Ali Butt, assistant professor of computer science, was recently awarded a NetApp Faculty Fellowship. The fellowship was awarded from a proposal entitled “Studying the Impact of Storage System Design on Hadoop Performance.” This program funds research on data storage and related topics. Such fellowships have been awarded previously to faculty at institutions such as Harvard, Brown, Cornell, Stony Brook, University of California—San Diego, and the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Butt’s description of the research: "In this project, we will extend and enhance our open-source cloud back-end (Hadoop) simulator (developed earlier through support from an IBM Faculty Award) to study the impact of network-attached shared storage on the Hadoop ecosystem. State-of-the-art Hadoop clusters use node-local storage, which although desirable is not manageable, and thus will not scale well in the era of massive multi-cores. To this end, the project will provide insights into designing next-generation cloud back-ends."

NetApp is a premier CSRC member.

3D Interaction Group wins Grand Prize and Best Paper

Members of the 3D Interaction Group, including several graduate students and faculty advisor, Dr. Doug Bowman, associate professor of computer science, captured both the Grand Prize, for a second consecutive year, and the Best Paper Award at the 2011 IEEE 3DUI Symposium in Singapore.

According to Dr. Bowman, the Fighting Gobblers team, “designed, implemented, and evaluated a novel 3D interface called ‘Building Blocks’ for solving puzzles. The entry was judged by a jury and by the conference attendees based on two videos and a short paper describing the submission. We achieved first place out of eight teams from universities around the world.” The Grand Prize winning team consisted of graduate students Felipe Bacim, Cheryl Stinson, and Bireswar Laha.

Also at the same symposium, graduate students Regis Kopper and Felipe Bacim, and Dr. Bowman won the Best Paper Award. Their paper was titled “Rapid and Accurate 3D Selection by Progressive Refinement.”

Two CS Faculty Receive Dean’s Awards for Excellence

On May 24, 2011, the College of Engineering held its fourteenth annual engineering faculty reception. At the reception, awards were presented to College of Engineering faculty for innovation in teaching, research, service, and outreach. Dr. Manuel Perez-Quinones received a Dean’s Award for Service. Dr. Wu Feng was named an Engineering Faculty Fellow.

Annette Feng accepts the award on behalf of her husband, Dr. Wu Feng.
Beginning with the spring 2009 semester, the CSRC started offering opportunities for companies to underwrite student activities via a Designated Sponsorship List (DSL). Since then, a variety of companies have helped provide additional funding for student activities, events, and travel.

Recent DSL contributions:

Booz Allen Hamilton provided support to two different teams of students in the CS 4284 Systems and Networking Capstone.

Freddie Mac has provided funding for Grace Hopper and Richard Tapia travel, as well as funding for AWC and ACM.

Google and Lockheed Martin were the two primary sponsors of Women in Computing Day 2011.

Northrop Grumman has provided funding for this year’s Grace Hopper travel.

Rackspace provided funding to a team of students in the CS 4284 Capstone class, as well as providing additional support at the silver DSL level.

Highlighted CSRC-DSL Opportunities—Help our student organizations!

CS-Squared Needs Equipment for Local Volunteer Sites

Computer Science Community Service (CS²) is a totally volunteer organization. They do not charge membership dues and rely on donations for support of their organization. One of their current sites has outdated equipment and they are looking to replace it. The request from CS²: “The West End Center in Roanoke, VA has an after-school program for underprivileged, inner-city children in the area. CS Squared originally set up the computer lab there around 2005, but the computers are now aging and could use replacement. The new computers obviously do not need to be high end - I looked up the cheapest computer on dell.com, which is an Inspiron model for $300. Shipping and Handling is $30, plus a tax of $17, which gives us a total of about $350 per computer. The lab can hold up to 12 computers, so sponsorship of this proposal could range from at least $1400 for four computers to as much as $4200 for all twelve computers.”

Recently added/updated DSL items:

- The ACM Programming Team seeks meeting support and entry fees to the ACM Regional Programming Competition
- CS Squared is seeking funding for travel to their various outreach sites.
- The Mobile App Development group is seeking a mobile device and a MacBook for creating Apps.
- The VT Gaming Project is planning a series of talks and workshops. They seek funding to provide refreshments.

Additional Sponsorship Opportunities: The online DSL listing is the most up-to-date. Please see www.cs.vt.edu/partnering/dsl for more information.

If your company would like to join CGI as an endowed scholarship sponsor, we can help you make that happen. You can see if your company will match your gift to make it even easier to reach your goal.

www.matchinggifts.com/VaTech/
September Events—September 11, 12 and 13

Sunday, September 11
3:00 to 6:00 p.m., Agriculture Quad (on the west end of the Drill Field and directly across from the Duck Pond)

All regular and premier members are invited to join us for our annual picnic. All computer science faculty and staff, as well as all undergraduate, graduate, and prospective CS students, are invited to attend and bring their family and friends. If you arrive in Blacksburg on Sunday, please plan to join us for this informal event.

CSRC Fall Luncheon
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.—Owens Banquet Hall

The CSRC Luncheon will be held in Owens Banquet Hall on campus. To assist with parking, the CSRC will be providing a shuttle service from the Chicken Hill parking lot. Additional information will be provided with your packet in late August/early September.

Prior to the luncheon, you will have time to mingle with CS students and faculty attending the luncheon. All students receiving scholarships from the College of Engineering and our department will be invited to attend this luncheon.

Fall CSRC Career Fair
4:00 to 7:00 p.m. — Cassell Coliseum—Ambulatory

The CSRC Spring Career Fair is a career fair for all undergraduate and graduate CS students. We also invite all students on our CS-Interest listserv which includes interested new freshmen from General Engineering.

We are also requiring all students from our new Sophomore Seminar class to attend this event.

Student volunteers will be available to assist you with getting in to and out of the Coliseum. Further information about unloading will be provided in your CSRC late August/Early September packet.

For Premier/Regular Members:

We have opportunities for regular/premier members to be on panels for several different student audiences:

CS 3604 Professionalism Class
Tuesday, Sept 13, 11:00 to 12:15 and Tuesday, Sept 13, 12:30 to 1:45

Juniors and seniors in computer science are invited to ask representatives about their companies, searching for that first full-time position, and the current job market.

CS 1944 Sophomore Seminar
Tuesday, Sept 13, 4:00 to 4:50

The sophomore seminar is a new requirement for all students completing their degrees in 2014 and thereafter. Topics for the panel will include how to interact with recruiters, how to prepare for a career fair, what makes an effective elevator speech, and more. This panel should be about helping students to interact professionally with corporate recruiters.

CS 4944 Senior Seminar
Tuesday, Sept 13, 5:00 to 5:50

These graduating seniors are moving on to positions in industry or on to grad school. Topics include transitioning to the workplace and career management.

Hypatia/Galileo Learning Communities. (This fall’s panel will have additional corporate representatives, in addition to our CSRC reps. The CSRC will only be providing two panelists for this discussion.)
Tuesday, Sept 13, 7:00 to 7:50 p.m.

Our representatives are invited to speak with students in these learning communities. Students are all first year engineering students.