

## NMSU DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



WELCOME TO A NEW ISSUE OF THE  
NMSU COMPUTER SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENTAL NEWSLETTER!

## We've had a busy year!

Greetings from the Department of Computer Science! As department head, I am excited to have been given the opportunity to serve this great department in my new capacity, and I look forward to sharing this new adventure with colleagues, students, friends and YOU, our alumni, our representatives in the world.

The last few months have been exciting and

challenging. Throughout the many changes happening at NMSU, our department holds strong and keeps growing. In the last few months we have witnessed outstanding research accomplishments, professional recognition, and a booming 9% increase in enrollment in our CS classes. Our department, too, is going through some profound changes: some new faces are with

us, and some old friends have said "goodbye" and moved to their next chapters.

I hope you will help us to move forward to our next chapter with your participation, suggestions, and departmental gifts!

**GO AGGIES!**

Enrico Pontelli

Department Head, Computer Science



WELCOME TO DR. MISRA



CS STAFF RECEIVE AWARDS



CS ALUMNI RECOGNIZED

## Welcome to Dr. Satyajayant "Jay" Misra

In fall 2009, the department welcomed a new addition in its faculty ranks. Dr. Satyajayant "Jay" Misra joined our department to provide much needed expertise in the area of computer networks.

Last July, Jay completed his doctoral studies in Computer Science and Engineering at Arizona State University. He developed his doctoral research as part of a world-renowned research group in the field of wireless networks.

Jay's research interests include:

- Security: with focus on data communication, localization and key management
- Privacy: with focus on anonymous communications and authentication
- Reliability: with focus on connectivity, survivability and lifetime maximization
- Social Networks: with focus on modeling and analysis

Jay has already made a positive impact on the department with his great energy and enthusiasm. His first course (the introductory course on computer networks) has already been welcomed with excitement by many students.



## CS STAFF MEMBERS WIN AWARDS

In spring 2009, two of our outstanding staff members received prestigious recognition from the College of Arts & Sciences. Ms. Jenny Griffith, Secretary II, received the Non-Exempt Employee Recognition Award. Ms. Rachel Jensen, program coordinator for the Young Women in Computing Program, received the Professional Development Award.



## GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

Three graduate student received awards from the Graduate School. The awards recognize outstanding contributions to NMSU in research and teaching. Iyad Abu Doush, PhD student under Dr. Pontelli, won the Enhancement Award (\$4,000). Kamal Al Nasr, PhD student under Dr. He, and Zhengyu Ouyang, PhD student under Dr. Song, each won the Graduate Assistantship Awards (\$1,000).



## JOE SONG WINS ARTS&SCIENCES FACULTY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Song was one of the 2009 winners of the College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Outstanding Achievement Award. Dr. Song was recognized for his research and teaching contributions to the College and NMSU.

# Summer Camps 2009

The NMSU Department of Computer Science hosted three successful summer programs this year: Young Women in Computing, the College Program, and the High School Bioinformatics Program.

This year, 14 students and two student aides were selected to participate in the **Young Women in Computing Program**. Curriculum included programming with Alice, web programming, robotics, bioinformatics, and computational textile. The computational textile course was co-taught by graduate and undergraduate research assistants. Students received presentations from NMSU Financial Aid and Admissions, and also participated in a challenge course, climbed the rock wall, and took a class in self-defense, all to aid them in team building.

The **Community College Program** was comprised of eight students from local community colleges in New Mexico and Texas. Students in the program received training in Java programming, web programming, bioinformatics, and

robotics. They also heard presentations from CS professors and others on current research topics in CS. Fifteen students were selected to participate in the **High School Bioinformatics Program**. These students participated in both computer labs and hands-on wet lab research in the field of bioinformatics. Students were grouped by interests and completed a research project and poster, which they presented to parents and NMSU faculty and staff at the end of the program.

In addition to their scheduled curricula, we scheduled weekly optional events to bring students and staff together to have fun and build a sense of community. These events included a movie night, game night, swing dancing lessons, games on the Horseshoe, and a game of "Clue Comes to Life" on the NMSU campus. Many also participated in our two presentations and parties for program participants, their parents, and our NMSU community.



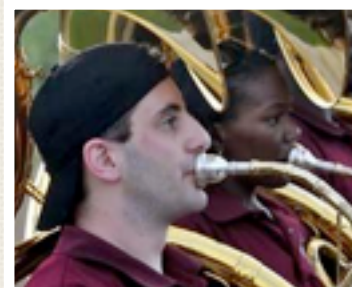
## NEW FACES IN THE CS DEPARTMENT



JAY MISRA  
(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR)



KAREN HANCOCK  
(SECRETARY III)



RYAN "KIP" VORDERMANN  
(COMPUTER OPERATION GROUP)



BEN WRIGHT  
(PRESIDENT CSGSO)

## Great Successes in Research

Research productivity and impact of the CS department continues to skyrocket. Our research products have appeared in top international research venues -- notable are recent publications by our graduate students in the top conferences in the areas of planning (ICAPS - a paper primarily authored by doctoral student Son To) and assistive technologies (ASSETS -- a paper written by Iyad Abu Doush). Mark Chernault, a graduating MS student, was the single author of a paper accepted at the international conference on parallel and distributed processing. Research grants have also grown significantly. Dr. Song received support from Los Alamos National Labs to pursue a collaborative project titled "Discrete Dynamic System Modeling and Genetic Engineering for Methionine Biosynthesis in Legumes across Metabolome and Transcriptome." Son Tran and Enrico Pontelli received two NSF grants -- one to conduct research in design of planning solutions in presence of incomplete knowledge and one to design new solutions for accessibility of mathematics for visually impaired students.

## New Educational Programs

The department is making giant steps toward the expansion of its educational programs. A new master of science degree in bioinformatics is in the final stages of approval at the state level. This program will enable us to provide specialized graduate-level training in computational biology -- one of our target focus areas. The second exciting program in the works is a bachelor of arts degree in computer science. This will be a flexible undergraduate program aimed at students who are interested in combining a rigorous preparation in CS with in-depth training in a different discipline (i.e., as part of a double major). This program will allow our department to create a new generation of computer scientists with strong interdisciplinary preparation.



## CS ALUMNUS RECOGNIZED DURING HOMECOMING 2009

Dr. Ann Q. Gates, an alumna of our department, was recognized as one of the NMSU Distinguished Alumni during Homecoming 2009. Dr. Gates is currently the Associate Vice President for Research at UTEP. She is a renowned researcher in cyberinfrastructures and a strong advocate for diversity in the field of computing. We are very proud of the many accomplishments of Dr. Gates.



## INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMPETITION WINNERS

A team composed of two doctoral students (Vien Tran and Khoi Nguyen) and two faculty members (Son Tran and Enrico Pontelli) took first prize in the non-observable non-deterministic (NOND) track of the bi-annual International Planning Competition held in Sydney, Australia.



## OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AT DREAM3 CHALLENGES

A team of NMSU CS graduate and undergraduate students entered the DREAM3 Challenges (Dialogue for Reverse Engineering Assessments and Methods). Graduate students Zhengyu Ouyang and Yang Zhang and CS senior Samuel Palmer entered the competition and had impressive results. They placed 13th in reconstruction five yeast and E. coli gene regulatory networks, each of 100 genes.

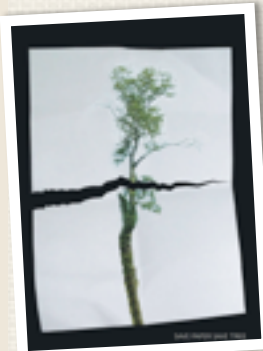
# BE PART OF THE DEPARTMENT!



## CS DEPARTMENT ON FACEBOOK!

Join us on Facebook!

**GROUP NAME: NMSU CS**



## SAVE PAPER – GET YOUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

Please consider requesting the next issue of the newsletter to be sent electronically to your email. To request this, send an email to: [epontell@cs.nmsu.edu](mailto:epontell@cs.nmsu.edu)

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT?

There are many different ways to give back to the department. The simplest way is to make a donation. Your donation will support the students pursuing their educational dreams, through scholarships, renovation of equipment, and acquisition of materials and supplies. In particular, we are launching a new campaign aimed at creating new opportunities to help young women interested in pursuing studies in computer science (more on this in an upcoming newsletter). Your donation is tax deductible and even a small contribution will make a big difference!

Please join our Facebook page and help us develop a community of NMSU CS alumni. If you are in the area, come by and visit! Or, simply, send us your ideas: your experience is valuable to assist with development, to help our students connect with alumni and potential employers, and to grow into a bigger and stronger department. You may contact either department head Enrico Pontelli ([epontell@cs.nmsu.edu](mailto:epontell@cs.nmsu.edu)) or Elaine Stachera ([elainek@nmsu.edu](mailto:elainek@nmsu.edu)) in development and philanthropic gifts if you have any questions or suggestions.

### FUNDS:

- ☐ YOUNG WOMEN IN COMPUTING
- ☐ RICHARD H. STARK SCHOLARSHIP
- ☐ FOUNDERS' ENDOWMENT FUND
- ☐ GENERAL SCHOLARSHIPS
- ☐ EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE
- ☐ SOFTWARE AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
- ☐ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

Thank you for your gift to the Computer Science Department at NMSU!

NAME:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Phone:

E-mail:

Enclosed is my gift of:

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ \$10\_\_\_ \$25\_\_\_ \$50\_\_\_ \$100\_\_\_ \$250\_\_\_ \$500\_\_\_ \$1,000\_\_\_

Please choose the desired use of your gift from the table on the left and make checks payable to the **NMSU FOUNDATION**. Mail to:

Dr. Enrico Pontelli  
Department of Computer Science  
MSC CS  
New Mexico State University  
Box 30001  
Las Cruces, NM 88003

You may also give online: <https://www.nmsu.edu/~giving/gift.htm>



JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!  
NMSU CS



## CONTACT US!

If you are an alumni of the CS department, we want to hear from you! Let us know what you are doing and allow us to share your successes with the rest of the NMSU Computer Science family.

Send your contact information, news, and suggestions to:

Dr. Enrico Pontelli  
Department of Computer Science  
MSC CS  
New Mexico State University  
P.O. Box 30001  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001  
epontell@cs.nmsu.edu  
(575) 646-3723  
<http://www.cs.nmsu.edu>

Department of Computer Science  
MSC CS  
New Mexico State University  
P.O. Box 30001  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001

