

Strategic Advisory Board Conference Call Minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2009

The NC State University Department of Computer Science Strategic Advisory Board met via conference call on Thursday, January 8, 2009. Below is a summary of the discussion points, actions and decisions.

Identified Participants - C. Benson, S. Chopra, W. Clark, K. Collins, J. Fearrington, C. Healey, K. Hibbard, K. Markham, D. Ramoneda, M. Squire, G. Stephens, R. Stiles, K. Tate, M. Vouk, E. Wagner, S. Worth, and M. Wyatt.

Department Update - Dr. Vouk & Ken Tate provided an update on noteworthy departmental awards, highlights and indices since our last call on October 2, 2008:

- **Budget Update** – We are in a period of great uncertainty. After completing a 4% cut in the fall, we anticipate that NC State will be hit with another 1-5% cut this spring. While some of these cuts may be absorbed by the Provost and/or Dean's office, we anticipate that anything over 2% will have a real adverse impact on departmental budgets. The more pressing concern is over next year's budgets and beyond, as we expect to face a 7%+ cut of permanent funding. This may have a significant and long-term impact on faculty, TA and staff levels. We continue to be frugal and strategic in our hiring and investment decisions. There is no hiring freeze at the moment, and we continue to look for mission-critical hires, such as replacing a retiring lecturer in the fall. We continue to look for a strong faculty candidate in SW Engineering, and possibly someone in Gaming. On a brighter note, research awards continue to be strong this year and could help us bridge the gap with TA funding.
- **December Graduation** – we conferred 177 degrees, noteworthy because the class included 13 PhDs and 109 MS degrees, the **largest number of advanced degrees ever awarded by the department in a single ceremony**. Thanks to SAB vice-chair, **Mark Wyatt** for serving as our guest speaker.
- **Dr. Munindar Singh** has recently been honored as the department's **3rd IEEE Fellow**. This news is being featured in several publications and a special postcard to go to the CRA Forsyth list.
- **Dr. Laurie Williams**, an expert in pair programming, has been recognized by **IEEE Software** magazine, having one of her papers be listed among their "**25th Anniversary Top Picks**" for full-length, peer-reviewed articles and among "**The IEEE Software's Most Cited Articles**." The entire list of the 35 selected articles will be featured in the January/February 2009 issue of the magazine.
- **RENCI – NC State visualization researchers** and John Blondin, an astrophysicist and professor in the NC State physics department, won the awards for **Best Scientific and Best Overall Image at the Computational Engineering International (CEI) Visualization 2008** conference held recently in Baltimore.
- **Dr. Annie Antón** has been named as a member of the **Future of Privacy Forum (FPF) Advisory Board** and as a member to the **Information Science and Technology (ISAT)** study group.
- The work of **Dr. Carla Savage** is featured in the 2009 "*12 Theorems by Women Mathematicians*" Calendar.
- **Dr. Tao Xie** is the recipient of a **2008 IBM Jazz Innovation Award** valued at \$20,000, one of only 13 researchers around the world to win the award.

- **Dr. Helen Gu** has won an **IBM Exploratory Stream Analytics Innovation Award** valued at \$20,000.
- CSC graduate students **Sarah Smith Heckman** and **Travis Breaux** have been awarded prestigious **2008 IBM Ph.D. Fellowship Awards**.
- Computer science doctoral graduates, **Drs. Claris Castillo** and **Nirmit Desai**, won both **College of Engineering Graduate School Dissertation awards**, sweeping the awards this year...a real honor and tribute to the quality of the research carried out within our department.
- **Dr. Bradford Mott** joined the department on December 15th as a Research Scientist. He will serve as the lead architect for Crystal Island, a learning environment project that was first launched as part of his dissertation research in 2005.

Development & External Relations Update – Ken provided an update including:

- **Giving Update** – Despite the economic downturn, 2008-09 continues to be a strong year for us. Unrestricted cash donations through Nov total \$521K (8% ahead of 2007-08 pace YTD). The bad news, however, is that over 70% of NC State's endowments are "underwater" (have a current value less than the original donated value) and cannot, by law, pay out any yield until the values return. This has resulted in requests to the original donors to provide additional cash donations this year to allow for student awards to continue. By and large, these requests are being responded to positively.
- **Corporate Partners** – RedPrairie is our first corporate partner to drop its ePartners contribution due to economic factors. However, we have a commitment from Spark Plug Games to join in the spring semester, so we expect a net gain in ePartners for the year.
- **Significant Gifts** – Alumnus Jay Strickland has made a challenge pledge to match any contributions (up to \$25,000) toward the creation of an endowment to honor retiring instructor, Carol Miller. Tekelec has launched a new scholarship endowment, and Duke Energy has made its initial installment toward the creation of a new scholarship endowment.
- **Fidelity Investments Speaker Series** – The fall talks were well attended with two of three achieving "standing room only" crowds. Spring line-up includes Dr. Diana Oblinger (Jan 29th), Joe Freddoso (Feb 14th) and Jim Tobin (March 24th). Please attend talks and receptions!
- **Recent mailings** – IMPACT document, Research publication, and Fidelity Investments series mailers all released recently. Working on Connected alumni newsletter and Munindar Singh's IEEE Fellow postcard. Very happy to announce the hiring of Tammy Coates in the External Relations office in December.

SAB Business – facilitated by Ken:

- **New Member Nominations** – With Vivien Joklik's resignation from the board (no longer with John Deere), we have 20 board members, not including emeritus or faculty members, meaning we can take as many as five new members this spring. Our nominees for Dr. Vouk's consideration include (in alpha order):
 - **Greg Keller**, Director of Software Engineering w/ NetApp (Super ePartner)
 - **John O'Neill** (BS '96), President & Founder of Spark Plug Games
 - **John Sternbergh**, SVP & CIO of BCBS of NC (ePartner)
 - **Jay Strickland** (BS '97), President of WingSwept Technologies (ePartner)
 - **Donald Thompson Jr.**, President & CEO of I-cubed (ePartner)

Ken explained that there was a strong focus on increasing the diversity on the board. While successful in identifying and recruiting a strong African-American candidate, our top female candidate did not feel comfortable pursuing membership at this time.

Following brief discussion of nominees, motion to accept & approve the slate of nominees for Dr. Vouk's consideration came from Jesse Farrington, seconded by Mark Wyatt, and unanimously approved by voice vote.

UPDATE – Dr Vouk accepted the board's recommendations on all the nominees and formal invitations for membership were extended. John Sternbergh informed us of his intent to retire from BCBS of NC, and mutual decision was made to hold the slot for a candidate with closer ties and alignment with the department. All four of the other candidates enthusiastically accepted invitations. An official news release was made welcoming the four new members on January 30th.

- **April Meeting Topics** – Open discussion about special topics and/or specific speakers the board would like to target for the agenda for our April meeting. Suggestions included:
 - State of the Department / Top 3 Challenges (Vouk)
 - External Relations Update (Tate)
 - Virtual Computing Lab Update (Vouk)
 - Outreach / Student Recruitment Initiative (Tate)
 - NC State Branding Initiative (Stephanie G. Hlavin – Creative Services)
 - Industry Trends – what is unique about the trends and anticipated needs of your industry, and how your company / industry views the preparedness / effectiveness of NC State CSC graduates to meet those needs (All – will require some prep work in advance of meeting, and Steve Worth agreed to create a few questions which might serve as a way of capturing the data)
 - Overview of the Topography of the Board – Our board has become more and more diverse in its make-up and the suggestion was made that perhaps we should spend some time reviewing the specific industries we represent. (All)
 - Accreditation Update – any input or data needed from the SAB members? (Stallman)
 - undergraduate Curriculum Evolution & Modernization (Bahler)
 - "Communication Skills: What Are the Industry Expectations for Software Engineering Graduates?" Update (Dr. Michael Carter)
 - SAB Objectives Discussion (Farrington / Wyatt)

Closing Remarks – Jesse reminded the group to participate in the **Fidelity Investments receptions & talks** to the best of their abilities, and of our **Spring Face-to-face Meeting** here in Raleigh (**April 1st (evening only) & 2nd (all day)**). **Please reserve the dates on your calendar now.** More details to follow.