MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Prof. Fillia Makedon

With this Fall 2009 Department Newsletter, we welcome the CSE incoming and returning students. This is the second REACHING OUT newsletter issue. Its name tells it all: that we want to reach out to all of you, our larger family of friends, students, and colleagues. Recently, many of us have been reaching out to solve problems in different application areas, which are also significant to society. Recent project examples include, how to improve healthcare, achieve sustainable energy, design of better network communications, protect our privacy and many others.

As we start the new academic year, there are many things to brag about. Our undergraduate program is definitely growing. The quality and number of our incoming graduate students is significantly better than last year. CSE Faculty have received an impressive amount of research funding. There have been more than 19 NSF grants awarded to us since last February, as well as additional industry, NIH and DOE awards summing to over $5.5 million. We were successful in recruiting an outstanding new faculty, Assistant Professor Nate Nystrom, whose area is in programming languages and who comes with the strongest possible credentials, as featured below. This year we will be able to hire a new faculty again.

Our department has a new degree program in computer engineering, which compliments the other two in computer science and software engineering. Our mission has been excellence in teaching and research in order to reach Tier-One status. This means attracting the best possible students in the nation and especially from the state of Texas. It also means closer ties with you, the community, local industry and our alumni.

We ask you to please spread the good word about us and feel free to send us your input as we unfold the strategic mapping of our future. We are a friendly and dynamic department committed to educational and research excellence and constantly trying to improve. Please visit (http://www.cse.uta.edu/) to learn more about us.

With our best wishes for 2009-2010 Academic Year

Fillia Makedon
Professor and Department Head (makedon@cse.uta.edu)
NEW FACULTY

In 2009, we hired Dr. Nathaniel Nystrom as Assistant Professor in the CSE Department. Before joining UTA, he was post-doctoral researcher in the Programming Languages and Software Engineering Department at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in Hawthorne, NY. His research interests include programming languages, compilers, tools, and methodologies for constructing safe, secure, and efficient systems. He has done work on software extensibility, language-based security, programming language run-time systems, and compiler optimizations. Dr. Nystrom received his Ph.D. in Computer Science from Cornell University in 2007. He also holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Computer Science from Purdue University and an M.S. in Computer Science from Cornell. More information can be found in his website: http://ranger.uta.edu/~nystrom/.

FACULTY AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

Assistant Professor Heng Huang received an REP (Research Enhancement Program) Award for his proposal on “Mass Spectrometry Detection for Protein Identification and Biomarker Discovery”. The award period is from June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010.

Dr. Matthew Wright was invited to provide comments about the Conficker Worm on Fox 4 News on Mar. 31, 2009. “The Conficker worm is a computer worm that can infect your computer and spread itself to other computers across a network automatically, without human interaction”. It targets the Microsoft Windows operating system by exploiting a previously patched vulnerability. Find more information at http://www.mysfdw.com/dpp/news/tech/Conficker_Worm_Targets_Window.

Dr. Bahram Khalili received "Best Graduate Advisor - Honorable Mention" award as a graduate advisor in 2009. Honorable mention is given to the second best Graduate advisor (i.e. runner up) at the university level.

Dr. Linda Barasch, received an “Outstanding Undergraduate Academic Advisor Award“ for 2008-2009 in May of 2009. This award serves to recognize and reward undergraduate academic advising at the university level. It signifies the important efforts and contributions that academic advisors make in helping undergraduate students achieve academic success.

Dr. Sajal K. Das has been named the Outstanding Engineering Educator for 2008 for Region 5 of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers in April 2009. The award is given to an IEEE member who has performed in an outstanding manner in the field of engineering education. Dr. Das also received the Lockheed Martin Award for Teaching Excellence in Feb. 2009. This prestigious award is given to a faculty member dedicating time and energy to teaching undergraduate and graduate students.
Professors Mohan Kumar (PI) and Yonghe Liu (co-PI) have been awarded an NSF grant by CISE, CNS Division for research in "DOC – Distributed Opportunistic Computing". The amount is $175,998 for 2 years. The objective of this project is to carry out preliminary, fundamental research work in the area of opportunistic computing. A supplement of $16000 has been awarded to provide research experiences for undergraduate students.

Prof. Yonghe Liu has been awarded a $50K grant from Texas Ignition Fund for his proposal “A Proof-of-Concept Sensor Network with Ultra Energy Efficiency for Long Term Monitoring Applications”. The period is from 2/2009-10/2009.

Professors Vassilis Athitos (PI) and Gautam Das (co-PI) have been awarded a $16,000 REU supplement to their NSF grant IIS-0812601 "Time Series Subsequence Matching for Content-based Access in Very Large Multimedia Databases". This is a collaborative proposal with Prof. George Kolios (PI) at Boston University and the total amount is $466,000 for 3 years.

Professor Gautam Das (PI) has been awarded an NSF grant by IIS Division for his proposal entitled “Suppressing Sensitive Aggregates over Hidden Web Databases, a Novel and Urgent Challenge”. The amount is $251,186 for 3 years. The objective of this project is to understand, evaluate, and contribute towards the suppression of sensitive aggregates over hidden databases where privacy concerns is an important issue. This is part of a collaborative proposal with PI Assistant Professor Nan-Zhang of George Washington University, in which UTA is the lead institution. The total funded amount is $481,891.

Professors Chris Ding (PI) and Heng Huang (co-PI) have also been awarded a $200,031 NSF grant for their proposal entitled, “Collaborative Research: Non-negative Matrix Factorizations for Data Mining: Foundations, Capabilities, and Applications” by the NSF-DMS Division.

Professors Fillia Makedon, Zhengyi (Jennifer) Le, and Heng Huang have received $19K from NSF’s IIS program to support student travel for the UTA-sponsored conference on Pervasive Technologies Related to Assistive Environments (PETRA 2009 - WWW.PETRAE.ORG) which took place in Corfu, Greece during June of 2009 with great success.

Professors Sharma Chakravarthy (PI) and Mohan Kumar (co-PI) have been awarded a $267k grant from AFRL (Air Force Research Laboratory) for their proposal entitled, “A Distributed Middleware-based Architecture for Fault-Tolerant Computing Over Distributed Repositories”. 
Dr. Pawel Michalak (PI, Genome Biology group) and Professor Sharma Chakravarthy (co-PI) has also been awarded a $1M for their proposal MRI: “Acquisition of a Genome Sequencer FLX for High Throughput Sequencing and Genotyping in Genomics Research and Student”. The award is from 36 months, starting from 09/15/2009.

Dr. Mike O’Dell has completed an agreement for a $25,000 gift from Bynari Inc., a Dallas-based software firm, based on a current CSE Senior Design project and its potential to enhance Bynari’s product line. This gift will be structured as an endowment, the proceeds from which will be designated for graduate scholarships awarded to outstanding CSE Senior Design students. The gift will receive matching funds from the UT System, creating a total endowment in the amount of $50,000.

Professor Ishfaq Ahmad (PI) has been awarded an NSF grant by CNS Division for his proposal entitled “CSR: Medium: Collaborative Research: GridPac: A Resource Management System for Energy and Performance Optimization on Computational Grids”. The amount is $339,989 for 4 years. This is part of a collaborative proposal with PIs Sanjay Ranka (University of Florida), Jack Dongarra (University of Tennessee at Knoxville) and Kirk Cameron (Virginia Tech). The total funded amount is about $1.2M.

Professor Ishfaq Ahmad (PI) has been awarded an NSF grant by CCF Division for his proposal entitled “MCDA: Collaborative Research: A Multi-Element and Multi-Objective Optimization Approach for Allocating tasks to Multi-Core Processors”. The amount is $450K for three years. This is part of a collaborative proposal with PIs Sanjay Ranka (University of Florida), Jack Dongarra (University of Tennessee at Knoxville). The total funded amount is about $610K.

Professors Ishfaq Ahmad (PI) and Phil Cohen, Gautam Das, Donggang Liu, Fillia Makedon, Carter Tiernan and Matthew Wright have been awarded a $522,624 grant by Department of Education for their proposal “GAANN Doctoral Fellowships in Computer Science Specializing in Security”. This grant will receive $130,656 matching funds from UTA, creating a total amount of about $652K.

Professor Ishfaq Ahmad (PI) was awarded $45K from Adobe Inc for his proposal “Digit-Rights Driven Video Transcoding” and $30K from Semiconductor Research Corporation for his proposal “A Multi-Element and Multi-Objective Optimization Approach for Allocating tasks to Multi-Core Processors”.

Assistant Professors Donggang Liu (PI) and Matthew Wright (co-PI) have been awarded an NSF grant by Trustworthy Computing Program for their proposal “TC: Small: Towards Trustworthy Intrusion Monitoring Using Wireless Sensor Networks”. The amount is $450K for three years.
Assistant Professor Christoph Csallner chaired “Formal Research Demonstrations: Program Comprehension” at ICSE this year. ICSE (ACM/IEEE International Conference on Software Engineering) is the premier conference in Software Engineering. More information can be found at http://www.cs.uoregon.edu/events/icse2009/advanceProgram/mainConSch/#Thursday.

Professor Fillia Makedon has been invited to deliver a KEYNOTE PRESENTATION at the 13th Panhellenic Conference on Informatics (10-12 September 2009), Corfu, Greece, the premier conference of Hellenic computer scientists and foreign colleagues taking place bi-annually in Greece. Her presentation is entitled, "Emerging computational challenges in pervasive assistive environments". (http://pci2009.ionio.gr/index.php/keynote-speakers.html).

Professor Makedon has also been invited to give a second KEYNOTE PRESENTATION at the prestigious ITE-FORTH Research Institute that is part of the University of Crete on "Security and Privacy Challenges in Ubiquitous Human Monitoring", October 9-10, Killini, Greece.

Professor Makedon was Conference Chair of PETRA 2009 which received NSF funding to bring US doctoral consortium fellows to the conference. The conference was a great success, with over 100 attendees and several UTA faculty attending, including, Vassilis Athitsos, Sharma Chakravarthy (Invited speaker), Gautam Das, Alan Bowling, Samir Iqbal, Heng Huang, Robert J. Gatchel, Carolyn L Cason et al.

Mr. Thomas Rethard recorded his courses by using Echo360 systems, which are installed in several class rooms in Nedderman Hall. Mr. Rethard provided his students with these video of all classes for study and review purpose. About 20%-25% of his students report that they use them regularly, and most report they have used them for review of critical points before an exam. The Echo360 system is supported at this time by Don Lane of the Coe’s Engineering Televison group.

CSE FACULTY BOOKS

Professor Chakravarthy’s book on “Stream Data Processing: A Quality of Service Perspective” has been published by Springer in April. This book covers a broad range of topics in stream data processing and includes detailed technical discussions of a number of proposed techniques from a QoS perspective. This volume is intended as a text book for graduate courses and as a reference book for researchers, advanced-level students in computer sciences, and IT practitioners. For more information, please go to http://www.springer.com/computer/database+management+&+information+retrieval/book/978-0-387-71002-0.
UTA-sponsored International Conference On PErvasive Technologies Related to Assistive Environments: PETRA 2009

The PETRA Conference brings together different researchers to study how to best provide healthcare for @home and @work humans using sensor network technologies, robotics, imaging, improved interfaces and non-interventional monitoring. This is especially important for the aged who want to stay at their homes as long as possible. New assistive devices and mechanisms to connect the clinical with the behavioral markers may provide new solutions for the in-home care of people with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and other disabilities or traumas. For working environments, it is particularly important to foresee accidents occurring due to fatigue, lack of training, bad designs or equipment failures. PETRA 2009 (June 9-13, Corfu, Greece) was a great success with over 100 attendees coming from all over the world. It received NSF funding. PETRA’10 will take place June 23-25 in Samos, Greece, (www.petrae.org) at the Doryssa Seaside Resort (www.doryssa.gr).

International Conference on Pervasive Computing and Communications (PerCom)

The Seventh Annual IEEE International Conference on Pervasive Computing and Communications (PerCom) was held in Galveston Texas during March 9-13, 2009, (http://www.percom.org). Gergely Zaruba is the Vice General Chair of PerCom 2009. Mohan Kumar is the Chair of the Steering Committee since 2006, and Sajal Das and Gergely Zaruba are members of the Steering Committee. David Levine is the Local Organizations Chair while Yonghe Liu will serve as a Vice Program Chair for PerCom 2010. The PerCom was started by CSE@UTA faculty seven years ago and is an established premier conference in the areas of pervasive computing and communications and recognized as a top tier conference by most universities and organizations.

International Symposium on a “World of Wireless, Mobile and Multimedia Networks”

The 10th IEEE International Symposium on a “World of Wireless, Mobile and Multimedia Networks” (WoWMoM) was held in Kos, Greece during June 15-19, 2009. WowMoM aims to provide researchers and students a friendly and interactive forum for exchanging results and visions that shape the future of wireless, mobile and multimedia systems. It featured a rich and diverse technical program, keynote speeches from high profile researchers from both academia and industry, an industrial track, a demonstration session, and a PhD/Work-in-Progress forum. Additionally, 5 pre- and post-conference workshops will take place. Professor Sajal K. Das is the chair of the Steering Committee. Dr. Yonghe Liu served as the Finance and Registration Chair.
INDUSTRY NEWS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (MARCH 27, 2009)

Our annual CSE Industrial Advisory Board Meeting was held on March 27. It is a great success. If you are interested in participating in our next IAB meeting please send email to Pam McBride (mcbride@UTA.EDU) with your contact information. It will be a fun half-day, with discussions, poster session and a delicious breakfast and lunch! You will also have the chance to meet members from other nearby industries and make great contacts.

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER VISITS COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AT UTA ON JANUARY 20, 2010.

Dr. Jeannette Wing, who directs Computer & Information Science and Engineering (CISE) at NSF will visit the CSE Department on January 20, 2010, and give a Distinguished Lecture. We will provide more details at a later time but keep that afternoon open!

Dr. Wing began her position at NSF in 2007. Prior to this appointment, she was President's Professor and head of the Computer Science Department at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science (SCS). In research, Wing is an international leader in the area of formal methods—the use of mathematical models and logics to specify and reason about computing systems. Wing and her colleagues have made fundamental contributions to many areas of computer science, including abstract data types, object-oriented programming, concurrent systems and fault-tolerant distributed systems. She brings expertise in security, formal methods and trustworthy computing (http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_images.jsp?cntn_id=108322&org=NSF).

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The University of Texas at Arlington’s College of Engineering, which celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year, has emerged as one of the most comprehensive engineering programs in North Texas and the nation. The college’s eight baccalaureate, 13 master’s and nine doctoral degree programs serve approximately 3,500 students, making it the fourth largest engineering college in Texas. With more than 21,000 alumni, the college provides the local, regional and national workforce with motivated and highly skilled graduates. Research expenditures in the past year grew to more than $40 million, and the University will invest $160 million to add 295,000 square feet of facilities in the next three years. With a commitment to creating viable solutions to today’s most pressing problems, the College of Engineering is helping to propel UT Arlington toward its goal of becoming a national research university.

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STUDENT NEWS AND OUTREACH

WELCOME TO NEW STUDENTS

Joint Ph.D. Program established between UTA-CSE Dept. and the National Center for Scientific Research - DEMOKRITOS, the largest Hellenic Research Center. Professor Makedon worked with Deans Cohen and Jackson to put together this exciting program which President Spaniolo has signed as an MOU agreement. Demokritos Center has 9 Institutes and about 900 research scientists working on areas from Nuclear Energy to sensors, Bioinformatics, Bioengineering, Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, and many other areas. It is located on a beautiful pine-covered hill just 20 min east of Athens Center. The agreement is with the Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications and discussions have started about other engineering and science departments to have similar programs with other institutes. In Fall of 2009, two new PhD Demokritos students are admitted, Georgios Galatas and Alexandros Papangelis. Mr. Papangelis’ research interests include Machine Learning, Multi Agent Systems, Constraint Programming and Data Mining. Mr. Galatas’ research interests include Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Image processing.

SUMMER CAMPS

The Engineering and Computer Science Camps are one week camps designed to provide students with a broad exposure to the variety of engineering disciplines -- aerospace, biomedical, civil & environmental, computer science, electrical, materials science and mechanical -- plus related topics in chemistry and physics. Field trips to see engineering at area businesses and team projects supplement the classroom activities. Each session is limited to 50 students. The Bridge and Gateway camps are residential camps and the Entry camp is a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. day camp with a Sunday evening orientation session and a Friday evening awards session. The program fees cover a participant’s meals, housing (if applicable), insurance, project materials and activities. Thank Dr. Carter Tiernan and other CSE faculty for their excellent work.
Congratulations to Alexandra Stefan and Vassilis Athitsos on their wedding. They celebrated their wedding on Saturday, May 30. The wedding took place in the bride’s home town, in Bucharest, Romania.

Congratulations to Pam McBride on the wedding of her oldest son Morgan White to Sarah Horany-Seligson on May 2, 2009. Sarah is a UTA alumna and Morgan is currently serving as a Corporal in the United States Marine Corps in Iraq.

Congratulations to Weina Wang and Christoph Csallner on their wedding. Weina and Christoph got married on Saturday, May 16th, 2009, in Seattle, WA. They met on a bus to the 2006 company meeting of Microsoft.
Congratulations to Maiko and Matthew Wright for the arrival of their son Masato! Despite coming about four weeks early, Masato was ready for the non-ICU world and he and Mommy are doing great.

Congratulations to Jie Su and Yonghe Liu for the arrival of their daughter Audrey. Audrey Yuan Liu was born on May 12, 2009, weighing 7 lbs and 5 oz. She is very cute and her sister Ashley is very excited.

Training Fillia’s grandson Leonidas (16 months) on the beach in Greece.
FEATURE STAFF - Belinda Tarrant

Ms. Belinda Tarrant is Senior Secretary and Undergraduate Program Secretary of CSE department. She just celebrated her impressive 15 years anniversaries with UTA. She has been doing excellent job helping the students and the department.

Q: How long have you been working in CSE department?
I have been with the CSE Department since August 23, 1994 – 15 years this month.

Q: How do you like your current position?
I enjoy my work very much, as I am very knowledgeable in handling the Undergraduate Program and all the duties involved. I also take pride in whatever task I take on, I go above and beyond the requirements expected as I want to do my duties as thoroughly as possible. I am at times a perfectionist, not to the point that it hinders me, but to the point that I do the best and that is all I expect from myself.

Q: What’s the most Challenging or frustrating part of your job? How do you deal with it?
The most challenging part is when my extra efforts are unappreciated. When I know with confidence that I have followed the rules or guidelines, I can let it go. Another challenging issue is disrespectful students who demand special treatment. I know I am evenhanded with all, so I try not to let this bother me.

FEATURE STUDENT - Kapil Vyas

Kapil is from the land of the Serengeti, a place whose folks are very familiar with the “Hakuna matata” expression, which means ‘No worries’ in Swahili. He joined UTA as a Computer Engineering student in spring 2006. His major research interests include robotics, structured querying and graphics simulation. Kapil has worked on a range of robots from Surveyor’s SRV Mobile robot to Mobile Robot’s Peoplebot. “I find my work with robotics unique in the sense that I get to see the physical side of the abstract code I write”, says Kapil. He adds, “Though it is fun, the real challenge is to familiarize with the coding scheme that has been set-up for each robotic platform by the proprietor.” Apart from robotics research, he loves to play soccer and teach fellow computer science and math students.
Dr. Bahram Khalili is Senior Lecturer and Graduate Advisor of CSE department. He has been working with CSE department for six and half years. He received "Best Graduate Advisor - honorable mention" award for his excellent work in 2009.

Q: How long have you been working in CSE department
I have been working as a senior lecturer and graduate advisor since Jan. 2003.

Q: How do you like your current position?
I love my current position. I really enjoy teaching and dealing with the young minds. I worked for nearly 20 years in industry in the IT departments and this is a great opportunity to transfer some of my knowledge to our students. I also enjoy the fact that I help our graduate students realize their dream of higher education. All and all, I feel I have a very rewarding position and I am honored that I am able to help.

Q: What's the most Challenging part of your job? How do you deal with it?
I learn something new at the job everyday. Graduate advisors assist in various areas including course related issues, visa and immigration issues, practical training and work related issues, and making sure that students make progress toward graduation.

The most challenging area is to make sure students are progressing as planned, specially PhD students, and they don't end up lingering around without approaching a focal point. In Fall 2009, we ended up stopping the financial support of 5 students due to lack of progress which is necessary but not very pleasant to do. We have a great number of positive cases and occasional hard cases.

Q: Are there any special things you want to share with us?
I am married with one daughter who is 8 years old. I love sports (Soccer, GYM, and Tennis) and travel. My favorite travel spot is British Columbia, Canada. I was nominated for the Provost's best instructor award as well as the best graduate advisor at the university level in Spring 2009. I received the "Best Graduate Advisor - honorable mention" award in April 2009. That basically means I was the runner up for the best advisor at the university level. In addition to my teaching and advising duties, I am involved in developing a number of new programs at the CSE department. Some highlights include: BS to PhD fast track program, Demokritos program, BS to MS fast track program, and currently working on developing a Health, Science and technology graduate degree at the CSE department.

TO CSE ALUMNI

Please send us your news! We want to hear how you are doing, your latest accomplishments, family news, travel and events you are organizing so that we can add it into our next newsletter issue. Perhaps you know that Alumni of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at UTA, rank as top professionals in their fields. They work in America's leading corporations and in small enterprises and are advancing the field of computer science and engineering through research and development, leadership, technical management, teaching excellence and in other ways. We appreciate the support from alumni that is helping us build a stronger CSE program and we highly value relationships with our alumni. Please let us hear from you!