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SIGCSE News in Brief

Welcome to the March issue of the Bulletin! Last December was the second annual CS Ed Week with strong participation by SIGCSE members. We give you some highlights in articles by Dan Joyce and Joel Adams. It is not too early to get started for next year. Debra Richardson, Cameron Wilson, and Ruthie Farmer tell us why it is so important for SIGCSE members to get involved.

The SIGCSE Symposium is just around the corner. It promises to be another great meeting with the high quality presentations you’ve come to expect. Henry Walker takes a look at the paper review process in SIGCSE by the Numbers.

ITiCSE is not too far off and while the deadline for papers has passed, you can still sign up to participate in a working group. Want to know what is involved? Organizers Liz Adams and Jürgen Börstler explain all. And Charles Riedesel, a working-group junkie, writes about the pleasures of participation.

Mark Guzdial writes about the new Computing Education Coordinating Council (CECC).

And finally, the SIGCSE Award Committee wants you! Consider nominating yourself or your colleagues for an ACM Senior, Distinguished, or Fellow grade membership.

Newsletter Credits:

• Editors: Henry M. Walker and Z Sweedyk
• Contributors: Joel Adams, Liz Adams, Jürgen Börstler, Ruthe Farmer, Mark Guzdia, Dan Joyce, Debra Richardson, Charles Riedesel, Henry Walker, Cameron Wilson
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Calvin’s Grace Hopper Birthday Celebration by Joel Adams, Calvin College

It is a sad fact that most college students today have no idea who Grace Hopper was, or of her pioneering work in computing. The 2010 Computer Science Education Week provided the perfect opportunity to remedy this situation at Calvin College.

We decided to hold a day-long Grace Hopper Birthday Celebration. Our idea was to dismiss each class five minutes early that day and invite the students to our departmental lounge area, where we would serve birthday cake in her honor and use the opportunity to educate the students about her accomplishments.

To promote the event ahead of time, we created a campus news item and a web page1 about Admiral Hopper. We also invited faculty members from the other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) departments to drop by for cake that day.

To let everyone experience her wit and charm, we set up a computer running a continuously looping YouTube video2 showing “Amazing Grace” when she appeared on the David Letterman show. This let everyone see and hear this remarkable woman, including her visual aids for “nanoseconds” and “picoseconds”.

The event was a great success and we hope to repeat it annually. In addition to courses for our majors, we offer many service courses for students from other departments, so we estimate that over 500 Calvin students and faculty learned about the “mother of computer science” through this event.

1 http://cs.calvin.edu/p/GraceHopper
2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57bfxfiVTd4

CS Ed Week Activities Survey by Dan Joyce, SIGCSE Vice-chair

SIGCSE asked its members to share what they had planned for CS Ed Week. Many great activities were reported and we describe a few below. Something that many departmental activities had in common: pizza and cake! For a complete list of member events check out our website: http://sigcse.org/events/week.

Drexel University celebrated CS Ed Week with a Grace Hopper birthday party, fun Grace Hopper-oriented activities, and CS Movie Night. The student ACM chapter held an info-session on careers in CS.

Students from Villanova University’s System course renumbered all the rooms in the Science Building using signs consisting of binary numbers and information about CS Education.

The University of Calgary hosted a Speaker’s Bureau whose mission was to share their knowledge and exciting experiences in computer science with high school students.

Western New England College hosted senior presentations in the student center.

The University of Texas Pan American Department of Computer Science Mentoring Program featured a student panel of senior Computer Science and Computer Engineering students, who led an informal discussion on career pathways in computing related fields.

Photo courtesy of Julie Fisher, Publicity and Outreach Coordinator, CS Dept., Drexel University
Why Computer Science Ed Week?
by Debra Richardson, UCI, Cameron Wilson, ACM, and Ruthe Farmer, NCWIT

Computer Science Education Week (CSEdWeek) is a call to action to raise awareness about computing careers and the critical need to elevate computer science education at all levels. The 2nd annual CSEdWeek, which took place December 5-11, 2010, was a smashing success, thanks to incredible partner support, a new website, and engagement from the computing community. About 280 CSEdWeek-related events and activities engaged students, parents, teachers and the computing community around the world.

Computer science and the technologies it enables lie at the heart of our economy, our daily lives, and the scientific enterprise. The outlook for computer science-related jobs remains strong, despite the economic challenges we face. Yet even as the digital age has transformed the world and workforce, U.S. K–12 education has fallen woefully behind in preparing students with the fundamental computer science knowledge and skills they need.

While national, state, and local policy makers emphasize the need to expand the capacity and quality of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, quality computer science education is being pushed out of the K–12 education system. In the past five years there has been a marked decline in the number of introductory and advanced placement computer science courses being taught in secondary schools.

Today’s students are required to make decisions about their educational and career pathways often as early as middle school. Studying computer science in K-12 alerts students not only to the fact that it is an exciting educational discipline but also that it provides pathways to a rich array of careers including other sciences where innovation and breakthroughs increasingly depend on the contributed knowledge of computer scientists.

In its second year, CSEdWeek has grown into a full-fledged community effort supported by the United States Congress. CSEdWeek 2010 was a collaborative effort of ACM, NSF, CSTA, NCWIT, WGBH, CRA, ABI, Microsoft, Google, SAS, Intel, and DARPA. CSEdWeek is also a major awareness-building activity of a new coalition called Computing in the Core, a non-partisan advocacy coalition of associations, corporations, scientific societies, and other non-profits that strive to elevate computer science education to a core academic subject in K-12 education.

CSEdWeek received over 1750 pledges of support from 45 states in the US (in addition to DC, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa and the Armed Forces) and 34 other countries. Over 33% of the support pledges came from K-12 students, 17% from college students, and 15% from K-12 teachers. These statistics indicate that we achieved our goal of engaging students and teachers as well as the computing community around the world.

What’s planned for CSEdWeek 2011? We look forward to growing CSEdWeek into a major platform for inspiring students about this important field, for motivating teachers to think about new and better ways to engage students, and for providing the public with a much better understanding of the need for computer science education and the issues that arise when it’s not available. CSEdWeek is really still in its infancy; there’s much work to be done to improve computer science education and advocate for computing.

For more information on how you can get involved, visit http://www.csedweek.org/.
Since conferences are a central part of SIGCSE activities, members regularly discuss the submission and reviewing process for various conferences.

For SIGCSE 2011, 312 papers were submitted and 107 accepted. The review process involved several steps. Each paper was assigned at least 6 regular reviewers and a “meta” reviewer. The regular reviewers critiqued the paper and rated it on a 1-6 scale. The meta-reviewer summarized the reviews and classified the submission as "recommend acceptance", "accept if space available", or "recommend rejection."

In total, 839 reviewers participated for SIGCSE 2011. Altogether, 2037 reviews were completed. The following table shows the number of reviews assigned and submitted per paper.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># reviews</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assigned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>submitted</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With such a large number of reviewers, authors might expect a large variance in review ratings, particularly in the highest and lowest scores.

- Overall ratings of 1 and 6 were assigned by 4.1% and 4.6% of reviewers respectively.
- Discarding the lowest and highest rating for each paper (the outliers), the ratings 1 and 6 arose just 1.8% and 0.8%.

A rating of 2 is used somewhat less that 3, 4, or 5, but these middle ratings are all commonly utilized.

Comparisons can also be made of the low scores, medians, and high scores for each paper --- either including all ratings or discarding the lowest and highest.

Including all regular reviews shows substantially more range than when throwing out the high and low ratings. This supports the notion that ignoring the high and low (outliers) is appropriate.

Additionally, discarding the high and the low review,

- Papers which receive a rating of 6 from at least one reviewer get ratings of 4 or better from all reviewers. As stated by Program Co-Chair, David Musicant, "A paper with merely a single rating of 6 [after dropping the high and low] is (historically) guaranteed to be a strong one."
- Papers which receive a minimum rating of 3 get ratings of 3, 4, and 5 from all reviewers (no ratings of 6).
- Altogether, papers receiving a 6 rating or a minimum of 3 have a range of ratings of 2 or less.
- In contrast, papers which receive a minimum of 1 or 2 get ratings throughout the full scale (except 6).

Additional statistics for SIGCSE 2011 can be found at http://db.grinnell.edu/sigcse/sigcse2011/statistics/review-stats.asp.

Another way of analyzing ratings explores whether various reviewer traits have any statistical impact on the ratings given to papers. 4 The following table shows the

4 Previously, this question was studied for SIGCSE 2000, with the conclusion: "the following factors are NOT statistically significant in contributing to overall paper ratings: referee gender, referee's country (U.S. versus non-U.S.), familiarity of referee with subject, or paper format (electronic submission versus hardcopy)." For more information see: Henry M. Walker, Weichao Ma, and Dorene Mboya, "Variability of Referees' Ratings of Conference Papers", SIGCSE Bulletin, Vol 34, Issue 3, September 2002, pp. 178-182.
results of statistical T-tests for SIGCSE 2011 for reviewer residency, author of paper submitted to the conference, and SIGCSE membership. The conclusion is that U.S. residency has a statistically significant impact on ratings but author status and SIGCSE membership do not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer Characteristic</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. dev.</th>
<th>p-val.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S resident</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGCSE member</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, one-way ANOVA can compare ratings with a reviewer’s reporting of familiarity with the subject:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Tukey 95% Simultaneous Confidence Intervals and Fisher 95% Individual Confidence Intervals conclude that there is no statistically significance between ratings for reviewers with high or medium familiarity of the subject. Ratings for reviewers with low familiarity do give statistically significant lower ratings with a mean about 0.2 lower than those with medium familiarity and about 0.3 lower than reviewers with high familiarity.

Altogether, these results for SIGCSE 2011 suggest that neither being an author nor being a SIGCSE member has a statistically significant impact on ratings. Reviewers from the U.S. are a little more generous than non-U.S. reviewers, and reviewers with low familiarity of the subject are a little less generous than other reviewers.

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**SIGCSE Conference Update**

The 42nd ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education will be held March 9-12, 2011 in Dallas, TX.

Registration is open! Join us in Dallas.

The 16th Annual Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education (ITiCSE) will be held June 27-29, 2011 in Darmstadt, Germany.

The deadline for Tips, Techniques, and Courseware as well as Faculty and Student Posters is March 11, 2011.

The deadline for registering to participate in a working group is March 25, 2011.

The 7th Annual International Computing Education Conference (ICER) will be held in Providence, RI on Aug. 8-9, 2011.

The deadline for submissions is April 20, 2011. The call for papers can be found at: http://icer-conference.org/icer2011/call-for-papers/
What It's Like to Participate in an ITiCSE Working Groups
by Liz Adams, James Madison University and Jürgen Börstler, Blekinge Institute of Technology

Have you ever participated in a working group at ITiCSE? No? Then you have missed a great opportunity to meet and work with a group of like-minded educators on a topic of common interest. The actual meeting at ITiCSE translates to hard work, but also a lot of fun.

This year the ITiCSE working group topics are:
- Motivating All Our Students?
- Informatics in Secondary Education
- Information Assurance Education in Two and Four-Year Institutions

The deadline to apply for participation is March 25.

So what will you do as a member of an ITiCSE working group?

Good preparation is the key to success. You'll start working on the project soon after the registration deadline and usually accomplish a lot before the conference even begins. You'll arrive in Darmstadt on the Friday before the conference; this gives you two days to concentrate solely on your collaboration.

During the conference, you will spend most of the days with your working group, although you can take a break to visit sessions that interest you. By the end of the conference you will submit your draft working group report.

Over the following months you'll work on polishing the report, which is published in the ACM digital library. Working groups often publish significant research results in other venues as well. And working groups often foster research collaborations that go on, long after the report is filed.

Confessions of a Working Group Junkie
by Charles Riedesel, University of Nebraska at Lincoln

For years I have attended ITiCSE in exotic locales, only to be willingly sequestered in unremarkable rooms for days, trying to hammer out optimal wording for papers under strict time constraints. Why do I do this to myself? Is it the twinges of guilt I feel for attending ACM's ICPC (International Collegiate Programming Contest) all these years, where I get to relax while watching my teams struggle against the clock with blockbuster programming problems? My answer is a resounding NO!

These working groups are my oases, far from the demands of my regular employment which is time-sliced into classes, advising, meetings, and projects. I have met many fascinating people, joining forces with them on common research pursuits. Almost invariably these have been wonderful and fruitful, and I return home refreshed and inspired. The follow-up work on the joint paper can itself be a unique experience. Imagine having collaborators from around the world, each taking turns as the paper circumnavigates the globe during its fine-tuning.

ITiCSE is like a good Midwestern working man's meal. The working groups are the meat and potatoes, the conference itself is the gravy, and the extra days in the host countries are the dessert. It's a meal that is best shared with friends both old and new. It's a meal that can be enjoyed and repeated year after year.

Your invitation is coming. I'll save you a seat!
Computing Education Coordinating Council (CECC) by Mark Guzdial, SIGCSE Board

Professional organizations in computing sometimes collaborate around education (notably in the ACM/IEEE computing curricula volumes). This is, however, too rare. We need our professional organizations to speak with a common voice on computing education issues like public policy and K-12 education to support the critical needs of our information-based world.

A team headed by Tom Hilburn of IEEE Computer Society is working to establish a Computing Education Coordinating Council (CECC) to provide a forum for establishing such common voice. Other PI's on the NSF grant funding the organizing effort are Mark Guzdial, Jane Prey, and Heikki Topi. The effort grew out of the Future of Computing Education (FOCE) Summit, funded by the NSF CISE Pathways to Reinvigorate CS Education (CPATH). At the June 2009 meeting, representatives of over two dozen computing-related professional organizations met to discuss how they could collaborate to define and address the challenges of computing education. Barbara Boucher Owens represented SIGCSE at the summit. Creating an ongoing coordinating council was the top recommendation from that summit.

The plan for CECC is to establish the Council starting with five professional organizations: National Center for Women and IT (NCWIT), ACM, CSTA, IEEE/CS, and the Association for Information Systems (AIS). We are keeping the other FOCE organizations informed on progress and request their input. We hope to convene representatives of these five organizations later this year, and then start to grow the Council.

ACM Awards Opportunities by Amber Settle, Dan Joyce, and Susan Rodgers, SIGCE Board

The SIGCSE Board recently created an Awards Committee, with one of the charges being to raise the profile of computing education. The committee currently consists of Amber Settle, Daniel Joyce, Deepak Kumar, and Lillian (Boots) Cassel. We believe that one way to fulfill our goal is to increase the number of educators who are Advanced Members of the Association for Computing Machinery. The ACM Advanced Membership grades Senior, Distinguished, and Fellow are described here: http://awards.acm.org/html/amg_call.cfm.

ACM members can apply for the entry-level membership grade, Senior Membership, approximately every three months. Applications for Distinguished Membership with three categories (Educator, Engineer, and Scientist) are due August 1, 2011, and Fellows must apply by September 1, 2011.

Senior and Distinguished Members are self-nominating. Senior Membership requires at least 10 years of professional experience, including graduate school, and 5 years of continuous Professional Membership. Three letters of recommendation are required. More information is available here: http://awards.acm.org/html/senior_member_nom_guide.cfm, and the nomination form is here: http://amg.acm.org/public/SeniorMember/nomination.cfm.

The next deadline for applications for Senior Membership is March 1, 2011. The Awards Committee encourages all SIGCSE members who meet the requirements to apply for Senior Membership. Contact Amber Settle (asettle@cdm.depaul.edu) or Daniel Joyce (daniel.joyce@villanova.edu) for more information.