spring 2002

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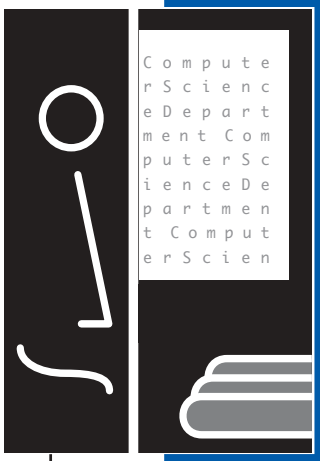

Computer Systems Laboratories Begin Major Renovation

A vision for the future of computer science and engineering education is one step closer to reality with a major gift from electrical engineering alumnus Paul R. Bonderson, Jr. His gift will establish the Bonderson Advanced Software Design Studio, a flexible modern laboratory where effective, interactive teaching can occur.

In addition to developing the software design studio, the gift to computer science will be used to begin a major renovation and upgrade of the existing Computer Systems Laboratories (CSL). The preliminary design process has begun and an architect is being engaged to prepare blueprints. In the new CSL, lab sizes and orientations will be flexible; the machine room will be upgraded; office, meeting and storage space will be enhanced; and hallways will be built to accommodate future expansion toward Dexter Lawn. Air conditioning and lighting are slated for replacement and raised floors and carpeting will be installed.

Depending on when they graduated, alumni may remember the old CSL consisting of only part of the downstairs of the North wing of the Computer Science Building. The current CSL consists of all of the rooms on both the first and second floors. The addition of an elevator in recent years made the upstairs space more accessible. The Bonderson gift will allow the department to take a quantum leap in terms of

Continued. page 2

National reputation

Superior students

Successful graduates

a newsletter of the computer science department cal poly san luis obispo

New Challenges Ahead

A message from the department chair, Tim Kearns

The new year has brought a number of new challenges and opportunities to the Computer Science Department. Prof. Sigurd Meldal, who has provided such strong leadership to the department, has left to lead the Computer Engineering program at San Jose State. His energy and initiative will be greatly missed. In addition, a few of our most experienced faculty are preparing for a well-earned retirement by reducing their teaching loads. To meet this challenge, the department is carrying out an extensive effort to recruit energetic new faculty members to carry on the department's tradition of educational excellence.

Perhaps the department's greatest challenge is the slow erosion of funding for education in California. In recent years, reduced funding has forced us to increase class sizes and faculty workload. If the trends of the past decade continue, Cal Poly's reputation for excellence in undergraduate education will be in serious jeopardy. To meet this challenge, the department, in partnership with the College of Engineering and the university, is undertaking a number of initiatives:

- Developing additional sources of funding from individuals and companies. The past two years have given us an excellent start through donations for endowed chairs and improvements to our laboratory infrastructure. We need your support to build on this excellent beginning.
- Forming a stronger partnership with students by asking them to participate more actively in department affairs and supporting excellence in education through an increase in student fees.

Our goal is to continue to improve the reputation and increase the value of a Cal Poly degree. We can do this by hiring excellent faculty, attracting excellent students, and working with students to increase their involvement and commitment to educational excellence.

I hope to meet with many of you during the coming year. I want to hear your views on how the department can enhance the value of a Cal Poly computer science degree to you and to our current and future students.

SLO. Punks Converge on SLO

The "Second Occasional" SLO.Punks* Reunion last August, by all accounts, was a great success! Nearly 100 SLO.Punks (many of whom are computer science alumni) descended upon SLO County for a weekend of hot tubbing at Sycamore Springs, dinner in Pismo Beach, volleyball at Meadow Park, stories and "mayhem," according to the official reunion website. On the tamer side, about 35 "punks" met with Cal Poly Computer Science faculty for brunch and conversation on Saturday.

**SLO.punks – A boisterous and social affinity group started by Cal Poly students in 1986. The name is short for the science fiction term, cyberpunk.*

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Inquiries, suggestions and comments are welcome.

CSL Renovation, cont.

modernizing the space and making it usable for the interactive teaching modes used throughout the curriculum.

In addition to $1 million for the computer science lab renovation projects, Bonderson also gave $5 million to the College of Engineering, to match funds from Cal Poly to build the Bonderson Engineering Project Center, a multi-disciplinary senior projects building.

Bonderson is vice president of engineering and the co-founder of Brocade Communications Systems Inc. He serves on the College of Engineering Dean's Advisory Council and the college's Centennial Campaign Committee. He was the College of Engineering Honored Alumnus for 2001.

The Pesto Group Serves Up Dividends

The Pesto Group, a self-organized social and professional network of young alumni, cares passionately about Cal Poly's Computer Science Department.

Their excitement and dedication led to the establishment of the Pesto Dividend, the department's first donor-advised fund. A steering committee made up of Steve Jankowski (CSC 1992), Greg Junell (CSC 1992) and Kevin Wang (CSC 2000) ensures that gifts to the Pesto Dividend Fund are used to achieve the goals of the contributors.

Consultation with the Pesto Group this year led to a network upgrade in the Computer Systems Lab, sponsorship of "Expanding Your Horizons" (a March 2002 conference at Cuesta College for seventh and eighth grade girls to nurture their interest in careers in math and science), and commitment to award several Pesto scholarships in the spring.

Pesto Group members like the donor-advised aspect, because it enhances their connection to the department and increases accountability on both sides.

For more information about the Pesto Dividend Fund, contact Greg Junell at greg@junell.net.

THE PLACE TO BE!

April 20

Open House Presents **Poly Royal**

(http://orientation.calpoly.edu/openhouse/)

Computer Science **Alumni Reception** (email: estier@calpoly.edu)

May 31

Computer Science Banquet (email: chicken@calpoly.edu)

In Memorium

Professor Emeritus Reino Hannula, 83, died in September 2001, at his residence in Fallbrook. Hannula taught mathematics and computer science at Cal Poly from 1962 to 1981. A source of colorful history, his life journey took him from his roots as a grocer to his career as a computer scientist. He taught assembly language programming at Cal Poly and wrote a book, "Computers and Programming: A System 360/370 Assembler Language Approach." He is remembered as a lifelong scholar who was always interested in learning new things, and as a backgammon champ!

CSC Ranks #1 In Nation ...Again!

The value of a Cal Poly Computer Science degree keeps growing with our continued national recognition as a top public undergraduate Computer Science Department. Industry demand for computer science and computer engineering graduates remains strong, despite the slowdown in the economy, and student demand for our programs remains at an all-time high. For Fall 2001, 3,368 students applied for admission to the computer science and computer engineering programs, with about 250 new students enrolling.

Getting into Cal Poly isn't easy, and qualifications for computer science and computer engineering applicants exceed the university average by far. For those students selected for admission, chances are that their high school GPA is over 4.0 and their SAT score exceeds 1300 by at least 20 points.

All these were factors in the U.S. News & World Report "America's Best Colleges, 2002 Edition" rankings. Cal Poly was the highest ranked public undergraduate Computer Science Department.

Several Cal Poly Computer Science alumni were on hand to present a $7,500 check to the department to support research and instruction in the software engineering curriculum. Airtreks and Cal Poly CSC alumni working for the company provided guest lecturers and technical points of contact in support of the advanced software engineering courses, and provided an industrial software development project experience. Pictured, from left, Assoc. Prof. Dan Stearns, Ben Scarrola (BS CSC 1998), John Taylor (BS CSC 2000), Dean Peter Lee, Jim Pilaar (Airtreks.com president and founder), Prof. Sigurd Meldal, Anne Beug (BS CSC 2000).

Alumni Updates

Randy Scovil (CSC grad student) teaches computer science at Cuesta College and is helping develop its CIS curriculum. Working with fellow alumnus Don Erickson (MS CSC 1988), CSL lab manager, he arranged for Cuesta students to access advanced server technology at Cal Poly.

Mike Matsui (MS CSC 1999) was a featured "Daily Prompt" columnist at the JavaOne conference in San Francisco last summer. He is a software engineer and Java technology developer at Sun Microsystems.

Mike Stickland (MS CSC defended 2001) is a senior member of the technical staff working with advanced information architectures at Sandia National Labs in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Janet Jones (BS CSC 2001) works for Boeing in Long Beach, in a group responsible for upgrading the avionics system on the C-130 plane. Before graduation, she was featured on www.schoolsintheusa.com, a Canadian web site about US schools.

Barry Bruins (BS CSC 1983) was named the Computer Science Department recipient of the College of Engineering Medallion Award for 2001, for his extraordinary leadership and commitment to the department and its programs. Bruins has supported the networking curriculum in many ways, ranging from teaching a course at Cal Poly when there was an instructor shortage, to playing a key role in the donation and development of the Cisco Systems Advanced Network Lab. The Cisco donation allowed Cal Poly to gather other industry support which totaled more than $1 million in-kind and cash donations to open the Cisco Systems Advanced Network Laboratory in January 2000. Much of the installation and problem-solving during set-up of the lab was performed by Cal Poly alumni now working for Cisco. Barry is a Senior Software Manager in Net-work Management at Cisco Systems and currently serves on the Computer Science Industrial Advisory Council.

We Want to Know!

Keep in touch with CSC and your fellow alumni. Send your info by e-mail to: estier@calpoly.edu or fax to: CSC @ 805.756.2956

Name _____ E-Mail Address _____ Graduated _____ Degree _____

Mailing Address: _____

What's happening? *(Use additional space if you like!)*

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Computer Science Department

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