NC State Computer Science Celebrates 40 Years

Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Computer, heads star-studded Technical Symposium

The NC State Department of Computer Science commemorated its 40th Year on a grand scale with numerous celebratory events held throughout the fall of 2007.

Events targeted at students, alumni, corporate partners, faculty and staff included the launch of the Fidelity Investment’s “Leadership in Technology” executive speakers series, a special online auction to help raise funds for a new scholarship endowment, a Geek-A-Thon PC refurbishment weekend, and a special 40th Year Alumni Homecoming Tailgate.

A very special 40th Year Reception and Technical Symposium in late October served as the capstone celebratory events, uniting all the department’s constituents.

Guests attending the 40th Year Reception included alumni from the very first graduating class, and several retired faculty and staff, eager to reminisce about the early days of punch cards and waiting in line for computer time. The event featured entertainment by “The Grains of Time” a cappella group, historical and congratulatory comments, and a special multi-media presentation commemorating the department’s history.

The 40th Year Technical Symposium was a day-long “celebration of our past and a look toward the future of computing.” Special keynote speakers included Dr. Al Aho, Lawrence Gussman Professor of Computer Science at Columbia University; Dr. Larry Hodges, Professor and Chair of the Department of Computer Science at UNC-Charlotte; Dr. Dorothy Strickland, President of Do2Learn; and Steve Wozniak, innovator, technology icon, philanthropist, and co-founder of Apple Computer.

During his talk, “iWoz: Perspectives on Personal Computing,” Wozniak gave a packed audience a retrospective “behind-the-scenes” account of his life; complete with stories about his fondness for practical jokes, his drive to make things simpler and more efficient, and the incredible life journey that led to the development of Apple Computer.

(See “40th Year” page 4)
Fidelity Investments Sponsors New “Leadership in Technology” Executive Speakers Series

As a result of a generous gift from Fidelity Investments, the Department of Computer Science at NC State University launched the Fidelity Investments “Leadership in Technology” Executive Speakers Series in the fall of 2007. The series is expected to feature five to six high-profile technology-focused business leaders annually.

Speakers during the series’ first year have included the likes of Matthew Szulik, former CEO of Red Hat, Tom Mendoza, President of NetApp, and Bob Young, founder & CEO of Lulu.com.

The talks are located in Lecture Hall 1231 in EBII, and are free and open to the public. For more information including schedules, directions, parking, and streamed video of previous talks, consult the official Fidelity Investments “Leadership in Technology” Executive Speakers Series site at http://www.csc.ncsu.edu/corporate_relations/fi_lit/.

VCL Wins 2007 Laureate

The Computerworld Honors Program recognized NC State University as a 2007 Laureate in the category of education for its Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) project in a medal ceremony last June in Washington, D.C.

Samuel F. Averitt, vice provost for Information Technology at NC State, and Dr. Mladen A. Vouk, professor and head of Computer Science and associate vice provost for Information Technology at NC State, accepted the medal on behalf of the university.

In 2004 NC State introduced the VCL cyberinfrastructure project. VCL has two components: one that provides services in the form of desktop-type applications, in-class group applications and more complex services or teaching environments; the other provides high-performance computing (HPC) teaching and research computing cycles.

Recent equipment donations by Intel Corporation and IBM, valued at more than $3.5M, will support the expansion of this powerful open source, next-generation computing environment to a number of North Carolina K-12 schools, community colleges and UNC campuses.

Faculty Impact

Under the mentorship of Dr. Donald Bitzer, Distinguished University Research Professor, three gifted students from Enloe High School in Raleigh, took 2nd place in the national team finals of the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology held in New York City.

Drs. Rada Chirkova, Vincent Freeh, Christopher Healey, George Rouskas, Munindar Singh and Michael Young all won prestigious and highly competitive IBM Faculty Awards in 2007.

Dr. Nagiza Samatova, associate professor, has been selected by Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) to receive an Outstanding Mentor Award for her service to the next generation of scientists and engineers.

Dr. Annie Antón, (pictured above) associate professor, served as an Expert Witness at a Hearing on Protecting the Privacy of Social Security Numbers from Identity Theft.

Dr. Tao Xie, assistant professor, has been recognized with a Microsoft Faculty Award.

Dr. Laurie Williams, associate professor, has won an IBM Jazz Faculty Award, and is director of the new Center for Open Software Engineering (COSE).

Dr. Michael Young, associate professor, is co-director of the new Digital Games Research Center (DGRC).

Drs. Harry Perros and Injong Rhee won highly competitive Cisco Systems Research Awards.

Dr. Alan L. Tharp, Alumni Distinguished Professor and previous department head, has begun phased-retirement.
Centennial Campus Honored as Top Research Science Park

By Keith Nichols, NC State News Services

North Carolina State University’s Centennial Campus, home to more than 130 companies, government agencies, and NC State research and academic units advancing technologies ranging from semiconductors to genomics tools, has been named the top Research Science Park of the Year by The Association of University Research Parks (AURP).

“NC State is about unique partnerships – creating student opportunities, research and economic development,” said Chancellor James Oblinger. “Centennial Campus epitomizes the work of NC State. It’s no surprise that Centennial Campus has become a national model for university research parks.”

Located on a 1,334-acre site adjacent to NC State’s main campus, more than 1,600 corporate and government employees work alongside a thousand-plus faculty, staff, post-docs, and students. Major partners include ABB, Red Hat, the Iams Company, Ericsson IPI, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, GlaxoSmithKline, MeadWestVaco and Talecris Biotherapeutics.

These partnerships allow corporate and government entities to tap into NC State’s strengths in cutting-edge research and client-driven training programs across multidisciplinary fields such as information and communications technologies, bioscience and biotechnology, advanced materials, and education.

Centennial Campus had a record year for new businesses last year, adding 17.

Centennial Campus is based on a “knowledge enterprise zone, which creates synergy leading to innovation and transfer, and improved quality of life for North Carolina and beyond,” said David Winwood, associate vice chancellor for technology development and innovation at NC State. “We are honored to be the recipient of the AURP 2007 Science Research Park Award.”

Centennial Campus has become a national model for university research parks.

Centennial Campus was selected from among finalists that included bwtech@UMBC Research and Technology Park in Baltimore, and Sandia Science and Technology Park in Albuquerque, N.M. AURP cited Centennial Campus for accomplishments in innovation and technology partnership creation for economic development.

"Congratulations to Centennial Campus on winning the Science Research Park of the Year Award," said AURP President Mike Bowman. "Centennial Campus exemplifies the new model of research science parks, in which strategically planned mixed-use campus expansions create innovation, partnerships, and a high quality of life for their community and the nation."
Wozniak, who holds an honorary doctoral degree from NC State, proudly told the audience that as he tours the world, he talks more about NC State than any other university—including UC Berkeley, where he received his actual degree.

Afterwards, Wozniak greeted students for a special reception and book signing. The festive environment included refreshments and retro, tech-friendly music like “She Blinded Me with Science” and “Hail to the Geek.”

The 40th Year Celebration Committee was co-chaired by Ken Tate and Dr. Annie Antón. They wish to thank the corporate sponsors for the 40th Year Celebrations including Platinum sponsors Red Hat, Tekelec, EMC, Cisco Systems, SAS Institute, and NetApp, and Gold sponsors Butler & Curless Associates, The Prometheus Group, and Strategic Technologies, and everyone else who helped make these events possible.

Innovation in Action: The Next Cool Thing

Matthew Crenshaw and Ameir Al-Zoubi demonstrate the use of the Manus Glove. Touted as “the mouse of the future,” the glove is based on technology similar to that used in the “Wiimotes,” the primary controllers for the Nintendo™ Wii game console, using motion control to interpret small motions into acceleration.

The project and the four-person team, inspired by Dr. Alan Tharp’s “Innovating in Technology” course, has been featured on CNN.

For more information, go to http://www.csc.ncsu.edu/news/625.