Note from the Chair

This is the last newsletter for the 2010-2011 academic year. It has been a great year with a lot of positives for the CIS department. The feedback I have received on the newsletter has been positive and encouraging. Be on the lookout next year for some new offerings and opportunities!

Even as good as this year has been, I am looking forward to next year being even better. We will be considering a new curriculum that will include mobile application development, cloud computing, and business analytics. Three of the highest in demand job areas. We will also be enhancing our student development opportunities, installing new lab equipment, and expanding our promotional efforts.

As my first year as department chair comes to a close I want to thank everyone for your support and encouragement. I wish you all the best with your end of the semester activities and look forward to next year.

David Wierschem

Alumni Spotlight

Willis Ellison, a native of New Braunfels, came to Texas State (then Southwest Texas) in 1998 to pursue a degree in Computer Information Systems. After visiting several campuses around Texas, Willis liked the appeal of a small college feel with large university offerings.

He enlisted in both the Honors Program and the Residential College program to make the most of the experiences offered to him at Texas State.

While completing his degree in three years, Willis interned for IBM and Applied Materials allowing him to apply his recently obtained class room skills to real world application.

After Texas State, Willis began his career at Dell in Round Rock, where he started work in Dell’s Revenue Processing IT Support organization. Ten years, and fourteen countries later, Willis is now a Program Manager in Dell’s Services IT organization.

Wanting to contribute to the growth of Texas State’s Business School, Willis came back to speak to the AITP chapter and offered up some real world advice gained over the past decade.

“I felt that when I left Texas State, I had raw skills but wasn’t sure how companies expected me to utilize those skills? How do I continue to grow in my education and career after college?”

Willis pointed out that all companies have common interests: customers, revenue generation, and logistics. “A CIS degree positions you perfectly to be a contributor in any company because you have a business background merged with technology. That’s a skill set needed globally in companies of all sizes.”

He also touched on the importance of project management and the role a good leader plays in driving a project from start to finish. “Learn from every role you perform in your organization, because someday you may be leading someone else in that role. This will help you set realistic expectations of those you lead, and will save your project from missing critical path activities.”
While attending a meeting of IT professionals I heard a term that I had not heard before, “slider”. “What’s a slider?” I asked? The answer: a computer programmer. “We call them that because they sit in a room and code and we just ‘slide’ pizza under the door to feed them.” After the initial smile I started to think about the stereotype.

In today’s world ‘sliders’ are a vanishing breed. They are being replaced by teams and people that have to interact with the users. Today’s technology employers are as interested in communications skills as programming skills.

As the IT industry evolves, each new technological jump creates new opportunities and new demands. For example:
- The introduction of smart phones had a major impact. New applications on a variety of platforms in a short time span resulted in a host of startups and much more interaction between the business units and the technology developers.
- More recently the introduction of the tablet PCs, (the iPad) is having another major and similar impact. Platform fragmentation is expanding.

The recent introduction of successful mobile technologies will have long lasting effects on the existing infrastructure and desktop and laptop technologies. Already laptops outsell desktops.

How long till tablets outsell laptops? How will business change how it communicates with its customers and clients and employees? What new opportunities are waiting in the wings and what will be the next evolutionary technology?

Opportunities such as:
- Not just getting a job, but looking to gain experience. Instead of working at McDonalds, perhaps volunteering to help build web sites for a church or other non-profit organizations. Of course you could also do both.
- Another option is to learn a new skill or language.
- The internet is home to 100’s of free tutorial sites. Do a search for ‘programming tutorial’. It’s amazing what you can find. Youtube also has a lot of free tutorial videos.


AITP

Our student chapter of AITP had a tremendous year this year.
- At the regional conference in Houston, TX 24 students attended and 11 won: 3-Firsts, 1-Second, 1-Third, and 1-Finalist.
- At the national conference in Orlando, FL 19 students attended and 13 won: 1-Second, 1-Third, and 6-Honorable Mentions.
- They hosted the 4th annual High School Symposium with 8 high schools and over 100 students attending. There were 3 sponsors and 7 exhibitors.
- They hosted the first High School AITP chapter at Lehman High School in Kyle, TX.
- They participated in the University sponsored Bobcat Build, a community support event.
- They even had their own intramural soccer team, the SQL Servers!
- In addition they hosted the annual AITP appreciation banquet and attended monthly professional meetings in San Antonio and Austin.

Next year look for more of the same fun. We are looking for more opportunities to get students involved and provide them opportunities to set themselves apart.

Preparing for the Future

The end of the academic year creates opportunities.
- For those graduating college it is the start of a new life with a new job and career opportunities.
- For high school graduates it is preparing for going on to college or more school or working to find that life long career.
- For those who are not graduating it is a tremendous opportunity to take some time and consider what you can do now to help move you closer to meeting your future goals.

Frank Outlaw

Memorable Quotable

Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Frank Outlaw