From the Chair

We have come to the end of another academic year. It has been filled with new opportunities, great accomplishments, and some loss. It has been my privilege to communicate with you each month and share the activities and aspirations of the CIS and QMST Department at Texas State University. I thank you for your comments and suggestions concerning the newsletter and ask that you keep them coming.

This year we created three posters that brought attention to what CIS is and the jobs and opportunities that it offers to students. We have had over 50 high schools ask for copies of the posters to hang in their classrooms and labs. If you would like copies of the posters just let me know. You can see what they look like by visiting our website at http://www.cis.txstate.edu/. Once there, look under the Resources tab. You can also visit the rest of the site and please feel free to give me your comments. I am always trying to improve the information provided.

I wish you all the best with end of the year activities. Enjoy your summer break and remember that next year is going to be even more exciting and event filled than this year.

Thanks for all you do,
In the News

It used to be that Apple fans laughed at viruses. Not anymore. Apple and its customers got a hint of what was in store with last year’s Mac Defender outbreak. This year, a much larger and more disturbing outbreak has infected more than 600,000 Macs with a piece of malware called Flashback. The entire Flashback episode has in fact exposed Apple’s security weak spots. Eugene Kaspersky last week argued that Apple is “ten years behind Microsoft in terms of security.” Is anyone safe anymore?

In 2011 approximately 234 million Americans used mobile devices, while over 106 million people owned smart phones during the 3-month period ending in March 2012. Samsung and Android continued to dominate the mobile market share in the United States through March 2012, according to the latest figures from comScore. Google’s Android only continues to grow month after month. Android now accounts for 51 percent of the domestic smart phone spectrum. In second place, Apple’s iOS is doing well enough at 30.7 percent with a 1.1 percent gain. Where does the future go?

“Oracle and Google Await Verdict After Final Battle Over Java Copyrights.” Can somebody use another company’s property just because it suits them?” That’s the question posed by Oracle lawyer Mike Jacobs during the closing arguments in the “copyright phase” of the ongoing court battle between Oracle and Google over the use of the Java programming language on the Android mobile operating system. Oracle is trying to show that Google violated Oracle’s copyrights when it built a new version of the Java platform atop Android, and on Monday, Jacobs sought to drive home Oracle’s case by tossing this rhetorical question at a California jury. Can’t we all just get along?

Microsoft is investing $300 million with Barnes & Noble for a 17.6% stake in its digital e-book reader the Nook, sending the bookseller’s shares soaring in early Monday trading. The two companies are teaming up to create a subsidiary for Barnes & Noble’s e-book and college textbook businesses, with Microsoft paying $300 million for a minority stake. Does our future hold that instead of being assigned textbooks in school, we are assigned a Nook?
Career of the Month: System Administrator

A system administrator, IT systems administrator, systems administrator, or sysadmin is a person employed to maintain and operate a computer system and/or network. System administrators may be members of an information technology (IT) or Electronics and Communication Engineering department.

The duties of a system administrator are wide-ranging, and vary widely from one organization to another. Sysadmins are usually charged with installing, supporting and maintaining servers or other computer systems, and planning for and responding to service outages and other problems. Other duties may include scripting or light programming, project management for systems-related projects, supervising or training computer operators, and being the consultant for computer problems beyond the knowledge of technical support staff. To perform his or her job well, a system administrator must demonstrate a blend of technical skills and responsibility.

The subject matter of system administration includes computer systems and the ways people use them in an organization. This entails a knowledge of operating systems and applications, as well as hardware and software troubleshooting, but also knowledge of the purposes for which people in the organization use the computers.

Perhaps the most important skill for a system administrator is problem solving -- frequently under various sorts of constraints and stress. The sysadmin is on call when a computer system goes down or malfunctions, and must be able to quickly and correctly diagnose what is wrong and how best to fix it.

The job description for a systems administrator says that little creativity is required, but this is not necessarily the case. Often, the job requires a great deal of creative thinking in order to solve a problem quickly. If a systems problem crops up, there may be more than one "fix," and it is the job of the systems administrator to determine which solution will be the most effective. He may also be in charge of upgrading the system and deciding which software is the most effective for the job it does. This will be very different from system to system, depending on the needs and functions of each. An accounting department has completely different needs than sales, for instance, and it is up to the systems administrator to tailor the computers to suit the needs they must fill.

In most companies, a system administrator can make or less name his salary. It is a specialized field, and a good candidate is usually worth whatever salary he asks. A wise manager will realize his company cannot be productive without a systems administrator and will look for the best one available. The median annual wages of network and computer systems administrators were $66,310 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned a salary of between $51,690 and $84,110. The lowest 10 percent earned a salary of less than $41,000, and the highest 10 percent earned a salary of more than $104,070.
Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Francis A. Méndez Mediavilla is an Associate Professor of Statistics in the Department of Computer Information Systems and Quantitative Methods at Texas State University – San Marcos. Dr. Méndez Mediavilla has been at Texas State University since July 2005.


In the early 1990’s he worked in the area of MIS as a security consultant, programmer (C language and FoxPro) for the government and for the banking industry. In the late 1990’s he worked as a junior statistician doing consulting for the government and for health insurance companies.
Association of Information Technology Professionals

This has been a successful year for the Student Chapter of the Association of Information Technology Professionals. We had 8 regular meetings with tremendous speakers from industry and were alumni. We attended numerous professional chapters in Austin and San Antonio. The High School IT Symposium was the biggest ever with 250 students attending. At the Regional collegiate conference at Sam Houston State University, we placed in 5 out of 8 competitions including 5 first places. We not only attended, but hosted the National Collegiate Conference in San Antonio. For our efforts we had the second largest attendance ever, got 1st and 2nd in Mobile application development, and 5 honorable mentions. An excellent showing, given that there were 71 schools competing. Finally, the awards and recognition banquet brought together the professional chapters with the student chapter for one large meeting that recognized student award and scholarship winners, and to show appreciation to our professional chapter supporters.

We are already planning for next year to be even bigger and better. Our goal for the High School IT Symposium is to have 400 students attend. We will be travelling to Lafayette, LA for the regional competition and to St. Louis, MO for the National Collegiate Conference. Our goals are to raise the bar higher next year and continue to improve and excel.
**Alumni**

Soon pomp and circumstance will play, diplomas will be handed out, and tassels will be moved. Another group of students will graduate to the ranks of alumni. Alumni are an important part of a university’s and department’s stakeholders. Your participation as advisory board members, speakers at AITP student chapter meetings and in classes, and financially supporting academic and student development scholarships add tremendous value and influence to our students.

Next year you will see more emphasis on getting more of you involved with the department. In addition to the annual alumni celebration, I will be working on some mentoring opportunities. I will be designing an alumni web page that will provide you with information and opportunities to work with the department and students. I also hope to expand the number of opportunities for alumni to interact with each other and faculty and to add to the educational experience of our students.

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**Memorable Quotable**

“It is only when they go wrong that machines remind you how powerful they are.”

-Clive James

I thank you for all that you do and look forward to working with more of you in the future.
Important People

CIS Advisor: Bethany Mellum to make an appointment call 512-245-1993 or visit http://advising.mccoy.txstate.edu

CIS & QMST Administrative Assistant:
Marjann Warren

Important Dates

Commencement
Resident Halls Close 6pm
Grades Available
Late Summer Registration
Summer I classes begin
Summer II classes begin
Fall starts

Computer Information Systems and Quantitative Methods Department
Texas State Student Chapter of AITP
AITP

May 10-12
May 12
May 15
May 29-31
June 4
July 9
August 27

http://www.cis.txstate.edu/
http://www.txstateaitp.org/
http://www.aitp.org

For back copies of Bits & Bytes, or for white papers on What is CIS? What are the different types of technology degrees? Why get involved with Extracurricular Activities? Visit the CID & QMST website at http://www.cis.txstate.edu/. You can find them under the Newsletters and Resources tabs.