



Computer science loses accreditation

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The computer science program at Arkansas State University recently lost its accreditation because of a combination of loss of faculty and disinterest in the program.

Dr. Jeff Jennus, department chair, said it was not necessarily anything inside the department. "Several of the issues revolved around support (of the program)," he said.

Although Jennus would not comment on many of the specific criteria, he said one of the problems related to the loss of a professor in one of the computer science positions. He said this was not a main reason for the loss, but there is difficulty in filling positions for the program. "There are so few graduates and such a large demand for CS majors," he said.

Gaining support for the program was another problem for the department, although Jennus said the department was looking forward to receiving more support in the future.

Accreditation is given to departments within college and universities that have met certain criteria by the review board.

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) currently reviews the computer science department at ASU. According to their Web site, accreditation is given to "ensure quality in educational institutions and programs."

Representatives from ABET said the department had failed to meet certain criteria requirements, but denied any further comment.

Seven requirements were listed on the ABET Web site: objectives and assessments, student support, faculty, curriculum, laboratories and computing facilities, institutional

support and financial resources and institutional facilities.

The ones most pertinent to the computer science department are the faculty and institutional support and financial resources criteria. The faculty criteria requires that "faculty members are current and active in the discipline and have the necessary technical breadth and depth to support a modern computer science program. There are enough faculty members to provide continuity and stability, to cover the curriculum reasonably, and to allow an appropriate mix of teaching and scholarly activity."

Standards the computer science program does not meet include having enough full-time faculty members with primary commitment to the program to provide continuity and stability, all faculty members must have a level of competence that would normally be obtained through graduate work and some full-time faculty members must have a Ph.D. in computer science.

Criteria for Institutional Support requires "the institution's support for the program and the financial resources available to the program are sufficient to provide an environment in which the program can achieve its objectives. Support and resources are sufficient to provide assurance that the program will retain its strength throughout the period of accreditation."

Standards the department has failed to meet include support for faculty must be sufficient to enable the program to attract and retain high quality faculty capable of supporting the program's objectives.

Jennus said the loss would mostly concern students, who have pride in having accreditation. "They're concerned on how it would affect them," he said. "They're also worried or concerned about supplies and

Oozeball



AOPi team member Lucinda Page slowly gets up from the mud after returning a volley in the Sigma Pi Oozeball tournament Saturday near the railroad tracks on Caraway Road. The Oozeball tournament was a volleyball tournament played on a mud pit instead of sand.

Herald photo by Brian E. Rodriguez

equipment for the program."

He said the lack of faculty is a prime concern presently because students want to know if they will be able to have enough classes or not.

The accreditation loss may have a much larger effect. It serves to notify both parents and students that the program or department has met minimum standards. With the Dec. 31 loss of accreditation, prospective students may turn elsewhere to receive their degree.

Another problem lies with the employers hiring the computer sci-

ence graduates. According to the ABET Web site, accreditation informs employers that the graduate is ready to begin professional practice. Future graduates may have problems in locating an appropriate job or salary.

The current highest recruiters for computer science majors are the Axiom Corporation, Wal-Mart Information and Alltel. A representative from Alltel said the accredita-

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Athletic program geared to boost ASU school spirit

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The new plan for marketing the ASU athletic program will include a new focus on student attendance, said Athletic Director Paul Griffin.

"The students have zero obligation to the ASU athletic program," Griffin said. "However, we intend to increase student participation through a direct marketing plan that will focus on them specifically."

In the past ASU has largely ignored the student population to the detriment of the program, he said.

The new plan calls for ASU students to become more involved in the marketing process. Through student leadership meetings, round table discussions and organizational meetings Griffin hopes to boost the popularity of all ASU athletic events to students.

"We are sending student athletes and coaches to meetings like the SGA to increase the student recognition of athletes," Griffin said. "This is a new proactive approach to interesting students."

Student leaders have already met with Paul Griffin through the Student Affairs office leadership council meetings.

"This is an opportunity to speak with those students who are active in the school and get feedback or ideas about attracting students," he said.

The athletic department sees students as the future of the program, Griffin said.

"They will go out and become donors to the university," he said. "It is their continued support that will help generate the excitement in the programs we offer."

Griffin sighted the new higher standards for Division IA competition as a catalyst for increased student involvement.

"We have to get attendance up, and one way to do that has to be by getting students to games," Griffin said.

Included in the new plan to up student attendance include giving away prizes, increasing student recognition by athletic programs and increasing the general atmosphere of the student sections of programs.

"We fully see the energy students can generate when they are engaged at the games," he said. "We hope that energy will translate into actual increases in paying attendance at games."

The ASU football season is going to provide an interesting challenge to the athletic administration, Griffin said.

"With the first game in Little Rock we will begin an interesting new marketing campaign," Griffin said.

The new campaign will include more than just students, Griffin said.

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Assistant professor accused of profiting from students

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A professor in the chemistry department is addressing claims by students that the sale of a manual used in his class over the past semesters violates the faculty handbook.

William Burns, an assistant professor of chemistry and physics, is accused of profiting from the sale of a manual he created for his class.

According to Section III of the ASU Faculty handbook, if a faculty member creates his or her own instructional materials, it must be sold through the ASU Bookstore or a commercial outlet. The handbook also states:

Neither the faculty member nor the department may receive direct financial profit from such sales.

The "manual" was sold to the ASU bookstore by Azul Publishing Company, which Burns is part

owner of.

Students had to purchase a packet from the ASU bookstore for \$22. The packet contained a syllabus and password for the CLT Blackboard (The Blackboard is a course-management system that is used as an augmentation to regular classes or on-line teaching).

Students then had to go to the Blackboard site on the Internet and access the manual from there.

Burns said he spoke to Dr. Linda Pritchard, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and was advised not to comment on the allegations until an inquiry is completed.

When contacted, Dean Pritchard said, "I can't say if he violated anything or not. We are looking into it and after we have completed that inquiry, we will act on that finding." She also said that she would not hesitate to take action against anyone in violation of the faculty handbook.

Lynita Cooksey, vice-president for Academic Affairs, said a previ-

ous issue was addressed about the manual in January of 2002.

Students were confused about what they were purchasing with their \$22.

She explained that they were buying the right to use material that was published by the author.

"The same manual in a printed version would be more than \$30," Cooksey said. She said that by offering the material on the Blackboard, it was saving students money.

Cooksey also stated that many faculty are also authors and the material they publish can be a study guide, textbook or manual. "However, if it is not being sold properly—then proper action should be taken."

Dr. William Allen, professor of art, also uses the Blackboard in his class and is an institutional advisor for the system.

Allen uses the Blackboard for additional information not available in the textbook. Students have the

option of purchasing the password to access the information when they buy their textbooks.

"In a sense, the Blackboard should be used as an extension of the manual," said Allen.

Mark Hoeting, director of Computer Services, clarified that the Blackboard is *not* paid for out of students' technology fee.

"The Blackboard system was used long before the technology fee was started," Hoeting said.

He said the money to pay for the Blackboard comes out of the regular university budget.

The question as to whether or not Burns' method for selling the manual violates the faculty handbook will be decided after an inquiry is made by members of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Don James, assistant vice-chancellor of Business, said: "We are investigating this...we do not have enough information yet to determine anything."

Book release



Herald photo by Emily Jones

Dr. John Marlin Shipman, professor of journalism and printing, talks with Jeff Chastain, an alum of the journalism department, at his reception for his recent publication on Friday. Dr. Shipman's book, "The Penalty Is Death: U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Women's Executions", is available in stores now.

Campus position provides learning experience for RAs

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More than 50 students apply at the beginning of each semester to become residential assistants. Depending on the need, between ten and 20 will be chosen during each selection process.

Applicants are required to turn in a packet of information including recommendations, a cover letter, resume and an application for the position.

If Residence Life officials approve of the individual based on the above information, he or she will then be interviewed by two or three RAs or any other Residence Life affiliates.

Once the applicant passes this process, he or she will be invited to a group session among other potential RAs and be observed on group interaction with other applicants in about five organized stations of group activities. This is the last procedure an applicant participates in

before becoming an RA.

An RA is expected to take a semester course of training on the duties of being an RA. Some of the duties include: working the front desk in his or her assigned dorm, be on duty in the dorm one weekend of each month, prepare bulletin boards, lead building evacuations during fire alarms and crisis situations, organize programs for residents and write up residents if they've violated dorm or campus regulations.

Damian Sanchez, a senior music performance major of Miami, said that being an RA has helped him to be a better communicator.

"I've developed a more approachable skin in dealing with people. I was closed off and it (the position) brought me out of that shell," Sanchez said.

Sanchez, an RA at Twin Towers, has been an RA for two years and he plans to continue the position next semester.

Sanchez said he has learned more about the judicial process at

Arkansas State University, policies and regulations in residential halls, how to work with a diverse group of residents and how to be creative when organizing programs for students.

"I've gained an understanding of how people work, knowledge over how Residence Life works, and a genuine experience of working with people," he said. "I think students should take advantage of this opportunity. You're truly going to benefit from it all."

Tiffany Cooney, a sophomore chemistry major of White Hall, said she has enjoyed her two semesters as an RA at Delta Hall.

Cooney said she became interested in becoming an RA from getting to know her RA during her freshman year and that encouraged her to apply for the position.

"It's a rewarding job to have on campus. You have people who come to you, look up to you and come to

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