PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Polytechnic Institute

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PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Polytechnic Institute

Department of

COMPUTER GRAPHICS TECHNOLOGY NEWS

WORDS FROM DR. HARTMAN

Hello everyone,

I should probably start keeping better track of these newsletters so I don't write the same message every month, but until then, we have another exciting edition of the newsletter to share with you. More inspiration from our wonderful students, and more exciting work being done by our faculty, are what's in store for you in this edition. We have also included a list of our current scholarship awardees – a true indication of our students' academic achievement and their commitments to their respective communities. Our department has grown tremendously from the time when most of us knew it as undergraduates, to nearly 700 undergraduate students and nearly 100 graduate students, along with more faculty than we have had in our history. As we continue to grow, please consider joining us along the way. We love to have our alumni engage with our current students and faculty – sponsoring a senior capstone project, serving as a student mentors, advising our students as they develop resumes and portfolios, participating in our Afternoons with Alumni program, or being a guest lecturer in one of our classes. There are a number of ways you can do it. Please let us know if this is something you would like to do; we would be happy to have you!!

My very best always,

Nate

DR. COLIN GRAY, PROFESSOR

Colin Gray is an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Graphics Technology (CGT) at Purdue. Alongside teaching, Gray directs the UX Pedagogy and Practice Lab, is the undergraduate and graduate UX Design program leader, and is co-chair of the graduate committee.

Currently in his fourth year at Purdue, Gray originally came to the Department of Computer Graphics Technology to help build and shape a world-leading program in user experience (UX) design.

Gray's original academic field of interest was graphic design, which started in high school through building websites. After completing a master's degree in that field, he became interested in design education and improving the educational experiences of design students in emerging fields. His second master's degree, this time in educational technology, led him to use education and learning along with his visual and interactive design skills to complete tasks.

"My lab is structured in a way to represent the cross connections among areas of UX design."

Gray leads the Pedagogy and Practice Lab at Purdue.

"We focus on the learning of design (pedagogy) and the work of design professionals in action (practice), and the synergistic opportunities that the intersection of these foci represent," Gray explained.

The lab group is made up of six undergraduate students, two master's students, and one Ph.D. student whose research is currently focused around design cognition, dark patterns and ethical implications of UX design. They also collect and study data from the UX design program at Purdue with the goal "connecting multiple subjects for the purpose of progressing UX design."

"This lab is unique because it represents and acknowledges the benefit of connecting multiple subjects for the purpose of progressing UX design."

You can visit the Pedagogy and Practice Lab online at https://uxp2.com/.

As a result of the research that members of the lab produce, the UX faculty continuously make changes to the UX program at Purdue. Recently, the group took a mechanical, research-focused approach towards structuring student experiences in class. Based on the first cohort of UX design students, the researchers used student projects to determine what aspects of design augmentation they were struggling with, linked with what level of familiarity the students had with UX design. In turn, Gray used this information to resequence the content of later studios, which has impacted all of the following cohorts.

Within his job, Gray most enjoys the energy and passion that comes from CGT students. He looks forward to seeing UX design alumni become leaders in industry and move on to graduate school at great institutions. In his students, he encourages persistence and stubbornness when it comes to reaching for their goals.

“There is a perception in the educational system that you should strive for perfection. That generally means that students don’t take risks.”

Gray believes that the right kinds of risks can lead to a greater understanding of one’s strengths and passions.

JAMES HE, ALUMNI

After reading the stories of so many others, James He was inspired to share his own. A recent Department of Computer Graphics Technology (CGT) graduate, He completed the 3+2 program in the fall of 2014 with honors. With a degree in computer graphics technology and a minor in fine arts, He has since gone on to become a senior engineer at JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Although He was originally interested in becoming an animator, his interests switched as his CGT classes revealed a talent for programming.

“At that time, I still wanted to become an animator, but became increasingly influenced by Professor Whittinghill, Professor Glotzbach and Professor Benes on the importance of programming as a skill for graphics. I made the decision of taking Professor Benes’s class because it was such a rare opportunity to see how graphics were created from code,” said He. As He looks back on the decision to pursue web programming, he believes that it was the best decision made in his time at Purdue.

“Not only did I gain the curiosity and interest for web development, my mind was opened to an entirely different world of possibilities from Bene’s class.”

He still has dreams of being a professional artist, but is glad to be able to pursue that dream with an understanding of the technology behind his work.

“I still draw both traditionally and digitally, but now I have newfound skills from pursuing something outside of my comfort zone by embracing technology and programming.”

His best advice for students: follow opportunities, but bring your passions along in everything you do.

COMPUTATIONAL ARTS CIRCLE

The Computational Arts Circle (CAC) is an organization for students in the Department of Computer Graphics Technology (CGT). Started in 2016 during the Polytechnic’s transformation, CAC’s meetings began as a way to incorporate the foundations of arts and humanities into the department. Professor Estebon Garcia Bravo believes that the incorporation of art into the CGT experience allows for a more complete education.

“The department is so much more than just one subject,” said Garcia Bravo “It is a combination of science, technology, and art.”

With an overwhelming amount of interest, students voluntarily began staying after class to work on personal art projects. CAC has since become a place for students to learn about new concepts, create and work on their own ideas, receive feedback and meet other people.

Anna Hardy, CAC president, has been with the group since it was founded by Professor Garcia.

“I couldn’t have known it at the time, but CAC became a community of ambitious artists taking time out of their day to learn from others and teach their peers,” said Hardy. “I am so blessed to be afforded the privilege to help this community grow as a leader within it, and I have never been more optimistic about the club’s future. In addition to being an environment of learning, constructive critique, and passionate sharing of knowledge, it is also a home for all of us. My CAC peers are like family to me.”

The group has provided art for events at Purdue, including the Purdue Alumni Association distinguished alumni dinner. Outside of club meetings, the group has visited the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art and participated in BoilerCon.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are means of motivation and encouragement for students. They support education, research, and other essentials that can help propel an individual into a constructed career. The need for scholarships is high enough that institutions, individual sponsors, and the government have an important role in helping students obtain a degree and become contributing members of society. Without this help, many scholars would lack the resources to reach their potential in education. Some of our own Department of Computer Graphics (CGT) students attest to how their scholarships have helped them.

“Thanks to my scholarship program, I did not have to put off pursuing higher education. I was able to continue my studies immediately and finish the program quickly before the years fly by,” said one student. “Thank you very much for making my master’s degree possible. It is because of my scholarship support that I am able to continue my research and passion at the Purdue Polytechnic Institute!”

Another CGT student explained the opportunities that became available to them through scholarship support.

“Purdue University would not normally have been a financially viable option for me,” added this student. “When I found out that I had been awarded such a generous amount of scholarship money, I was beyond ecstatic to be able to live, learn and grow at Purdue University. For that, I offer a sincere, genuine thank you.”

These CGT students have a wide range of goals.

“I want to create a company that focuses on making animated series for children, teens and adults,” explained one student.

Others aspire to work for fortune 500 companies, become independent developers, and to work in various competitive industries.

Investing in goal-oriented scholars is investing in the future. Through educational scholarships, these students are able to work towards their goals for the future.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Carly D. Fox	Stephanie Knab
Jennifer M. Coker	Evan C. Johnson
Lauren M. McDaniel	Drake M. Long
Patricia L. Mata	Epifanio R. Sadural
Delaney M. Rundell	Erin L. Cook
Magdalena C. Gonzalez	Emily A. Maneke
McKenzie M. Landorf	Duncan G. Moran

NEWS AND NOTES

The Spring Gallery Show, featuring work from the Computational Arts Circle, will take place on April 18, 2019, in the Knoy Hall Main Lobby from 6:30 to 9pm. The show will include pieces that students have worked on throughout the semester, along with the work of guest artist Kristin Underhill.

In May, two faculty members and five students from the Department of Computer Graphics Technology will be attending the ACM CHI (Computer-Human Interaction) Conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Students and faculty will present four publications, including a paper by Shruthi Sai Chivukula (doctoral student), Jason Brier (B.S., 2018), and Dr. Colin Gray entitled “Analyzing Value Discovery in Design Decisions Through Ethicography” that won the prestigious CHI Honorable Mention award.

The Purdue Undergraduate Research Conference will showcase student research projects. Oral presentations will be held from 1-4pm on Thursday, April 4, 2019, in STEW 214. The poster Symposium will be from 9-11:30am and 1-3:30pm on Tuesday, April 9, 2019, in the PMU Ballrooms.

STAY CONNECTED

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