

UPSILON PI EPSILON

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Greetings from Cyberspace: A Virtual National Meeting

GREETINGS!

Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE), the International Honor Society for the Computing and Information Disciplines, entered 2013 with a touch of the familiar and a large step in a new direction. Another strong round of scholarship applications brings news of an incredibly committed group of student leaders. Moving our annual convention to an electronic town meeting format provides the prospect of a more inclusive and larger audience.



in learning more about UPE, there is a wealth of information available on the website [1].

UPE/ACM Student Chapter Scholarship Awards

The UPE/ACM Student Chapter Scholarship Awards are given jointly by UPE and ACM to those who best “display excellence and professional commitment to the computing and information technology field.” The field this year consisted of more than 50 applicants, and the level of involvement in their student chapters and other campus activities was amazing and inspirational. The 2011-2012 winners, announced in the fall were:

- **Ertem Esiner**

(Koç University, Turkey)

Ertem was the founder and chair of the ACM Chapter at Koç and has organized many useful and interesting activities, including seminars and technology training sessions for the university. Especially noteworthy were numerous outreach activities for high school students and a city-wide programming contest in Istanbul, which is extending this year to a nationwide contest for Turkey.

- **Dalene Hart**

(Austin Peay State University, TN)

Dalene has been an active member and officer for numerous student organizations at Austin Peay, and is a charter member and president of their UPE chapter. Additionally, she is the ACM

webmaster and president of the Alpha Sigma Alpha Honor Society.

- **Hannah Miller**

(University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)

Hannah has an outstanding record as a student, research and teaching assistant, and student ambassador. She been active throughout her career in Women in Information Technology Systems, an ACM-W chapter, and is now serving in her third year as WITS president. The chapter hosts an impressive and varied array of activities ranging from networking and professional development to social and academic accomplishments.

- **Jared Wheeler**

(University of North Florida)

Jared has been VP of Student Chapter of ACM for two years and is the primary officer for communications and meetings with UNF Student Government. In addition to bringing in guest speakers, he has involved the chapter in community outreach through involvement in community events SQL Saturday and Code Camp.

In addition to their numerous good works, all four finalists have excellent academic records. Each received \$1,000, awarded by ACM.

Do you know somebody who is deserving of this award? Applications are accepted annually. See the ACM and/or UPE website for details of this year’s awards.

IEEE Computer Society Awards

The Upsilon Pi Epsilon Student Award for Academic Excellence was awarded to four students in 2012 by the IEEE Computer Society:

- **Ajay Bandi**, *Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS*

- **Chun-Kit “Ben” Ngan**, *George Mason University, Fairfax, VA*

- **Ajay Porwal**, *Techno India NJR Institute of Technology, Udaipur, India*

- **Diego Susanj**, *University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia*

Many congratulations to all four winners!

2013 UPE Annual Convention

The 2013 Annual Convention of UPE was

held on Thursday, February 28, 2013. The convention was held in cyberspace, conducted via the Polycom Video Conferencing System, courtesy of the Graduate School of Computer and Information Science at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Polycom system allowed members of the UPE Executive Council and chapter representatives to meet naturally over distance, share ideas, make presentations, present chapter reports, and interact across various environments.

NSU has been a pioneer in online and hybrid education, offering its first programs in 1983 and creating the first electronic classroom in 1985. A quick show of hands: how many of us were still teaching programming classes with punched cards in 1983? (Note: it is hard to type this article with one hand in the air!) As expected, the facilities were first-class and the technical staff was excellent, leading to a program that was delivered smoothly, with excellent audio and video. Many thanks to Interim Dean Eric Ackerman of the Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences (also, UPE Webmaster!) for providing the staff and facilities and making this such a positive experience.

The meeting was actually held in two separate sessions, in order to allow greater chapter participation. However, we noted that participants did not divide naturally between schools in different time zones. We are considering holding a single session next year, so that all chapters can be together.

The meeting began with a roll call and upbeat financial report. UPE's financial health has never been more robust, thanks to steady increases in computing enrollments across the U.S., very active chapters and the healthy performance of UPE's investments. This year, UPE inducted more than 3200 new members.

UPE also distributed in excess of \$70,000 in awards in 2012, including the Abacus Award, annual UPE scholarships, prizes for "first solvers" at the ACM-ICPC (International Collegiate Programming Contest), the ACM UPE Student Chapter Scholarships and IEEE-CS awards described above, and funds provided to the

Consortium for Computer Science in Colleges (CCSC) for distribution to its regions.

UPE will continue its support of the ACM-ICPC World Finals in 2013, which will be held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in July. The host is the current world champion, St. Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics, which has taken top honors 4 times since 2004. The Honorary Chairman is none other than Dmitriy Medvedev, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation! The field will consist of a record 120 world finalist teams. Prof. Bjarne Stroustrup, Distinguished Professor and holder of the College of Engineering Chair in Computer Science at Texas A&M University, will be presented with UPE's most prestigious award, the 2013 Abacus Award, at the World Finals and will give an address which will be streamed live to a worldwide audience. Keep your eyes open for further details about this.

In the past year, new chapters have been chartered at Georgia Gwinnett, Lipscomb, Austin Peay, McKendree and Czech Technical University in Prague. As we go to press, new chapters have been approved at Washington University in St. Louis, University of Illinois at Springfield, Southern Polytechnic, University of California/Irvine and Excelsior and most have chartering dates scheduled for the spring.

We were treated to chapter report presentations from Czech Technical University, Texas A&M, Drexel, Kettering, Rose-Hulman Tech, Southwestern, the College of New Jersey, New Haven, North Florida, Washington-Bothell, Lipscomb, DePaul, Lamar, St. Joseph's College (NY), Nebraska-Lincoln. As a quick summary, many of the chapters hold events in partnership with their local ACM chapter or other student organizations, including invited speakers, alumni events, and special events commemorating National CS Education Week. Joint activities are especially important for small chapters, which describes many of our chapters. A few activities that stood out were surveys of chapter members at Czech Tech and DePaul, a progressive alumni dinner at Southwestern, an internship "sharing" event at Rose-Hulman, showing Revolution OS at Drexel for CS Ed Week, a

roundtable session on graduate school at TCNJ, developing scorekeeping software for regional programming contests at Nebraska-Lincoln and participation in school-wide community service events such as the Big Event at Texas A&M and Hurricane Sandy Relief at St. Joseph's, which is on Long Island, NY. TCNJ had an interesting fundraiser, selling cans of spray paint for decorating the walls of a building scheduled for demolition. If you're thinking of doing this, please make sure you get the proper permissions!

The meeting closed with a discussion of a new award class, a chapter activity award. While chapters that presented activity reports at the national convention received \$100 each, we discussed presenting one or more additional awards for chapters with exemplary activities. Details are still in the development stage, and the discussion was valuable.

Overall, our first virtual national convention went very smoothly, owing to some excellent facilities, a highly experienced technical team, and testing connections prior to the meeting, which obviated numerous potential problems with firewalls and the like. The cost to members was low and the number of participating schools exceeded any in recent years. As a result, we intend to continue with this format again next year, and welcome your feedback on how to improve and expand participation.

I hope to see you soon, whether in person or virtually. Until then:

Cheers,
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References

- [1] Upsilon Pi Epsilon website. <http://upe.acm.org/> Accessed 2013 March 26.



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