

# Computer Science and Engineering Spring Banquet and Awards Ceremony

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The Department of Computer Science and Engineering held its Annual Spring Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Thursday, April 24, 2014 at the Memorial Student Center. This was the largest spring banquet to date and it was a phenomenal success.

Several differences set the 2014 Spring Banquet apart from previous years' banquets. This year, the banquet was open to the entire department; undergraduates were invited as well as Advisory Council and Industrial Affiliates Program members. Upsilon Pi Epsilon inductees were announced, and graduating ACE Honors Scholars and Peer Teachers were recognized for their achievements and service. Almost twice as many people attended this year's banquet as compared to last year.

Interim Department Head Dr. Nancy Amato presented Bill Crane, Mike Pfister, and Al White with the department's Distinguished Former Student Awards. Each recipient was given a commemorative plaque, and three deserving students received a \$1,500 scholarship in the Distinguished Former Student's names.

Bill Crane received his bachelor's degree in computer science



from Texas A&M University in 1983 and was most recently the VP of Engineering for LinkedIn. He also served as the VP of Engineering at Redline Networks and Proofpoint, and is currently a technical advisor for early-stage start-ups in Silicon Valley. Senior computer science major, Michael Gyarmarthy, received a scholarship in Crane's name.



Mike Pfister graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in computer science in 1978 and is the chief information officer for ConocoPhillips. He has worked as a computer science engineer for over 30 years for Halliburton and Atlantic Richfield. He has assisted in the API's standardization efforts within IT and serves on several advisory boards including the CSE Advisory Council. Senior computer science major, Kyle Eaton, received a scholarship in Pfister's name.



Al White is a Business Area Manager at Ticom Geomatics, Inc. He is responsible for Signals Intelligence, Geolocation and Cyber systems that support the Intelligence Community and Department of Defense. He also served 20 years in the United States Air Force Special Operations Command as a command pilot. He taught computer programming and systems engineering during his time as an assistant professor in the U.S. Air Force Academy and also helped establish an Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research Group while there. Junior computer science major, Alexandria Davis, received a scholarship in White's name.

Following the Distinguished Former Student Awards, Jory Denny, CSEGSA President, presented the student, faculty and staff excellence awards:

- Tony Moma: Peer Teaching Excellence Award
- Nick Melnyk: Peer Teaching Excellence Award
- Jory Denny: Teaching Assistant Excellence Award, Student Selected, and the Graduate Leadership Excellence Award

- Tiffani Williams: Undergraduate Faculty Teaching Excellence Award
- Lawrence Rauchwerger: Graduate Faculty Teaching Excellence Award
- Taffie Behringer: Staff Excellence Award, Student Selected
- Bekah Holle: Staff Excellence Award, Student Selected
- Amin Hassanzadeh: Teaching Assistant Excellence Award, Faculty Selected
- Yue Li: Graduate Research Excellence Award
- Robert Baykov: Undergraduate Research Excellence Award
- Larry Powell: Undergraduate Leadership Excellence Award
- Chien-An Chen: Mentoring Excellence Award
- Laurie Picklo: Staff Excellence Award, Staff Selected
- Bruce Veals: Staff Excellence Award, Staff Selected

Dr. Nancy Amato then introduced the inaugural class of ACE Scholars Graduates, Matthew Barry and Jose Andres Medina Vargas. Afterwards, Amato presented the certificates to the Graduating Peer Teachers:

- Jenny Chen
- Kira Jones
- Jinsoo Kim
- Thomas Klingshirn
- Margaret Ligon
- Nick Melnyk
- Tony Moma
- Ryan Oji
- Rosbel Sanroman
- Andrew Song
- Curtis Wendel
- Christine Woods

The banquet ended with the announcement of the 2013-2014

### Upsilon Pi Epsilon inductees by UPE President Larry Powell:

- Matthew Barry
- Tyler Biehle
- Roberto Enriquez
- Nicholas Hanemann
- Benjamin Martin
- Ryan Olivieri
- Taylor Patton
- Angela Ramsey
- Juan Reyes
- Richa Surbhi
- Paul Taele
- Ricardo Andres Zavala
- Shihua Zheng

The banquet and awards ceremony is funded by the department's **Industrial Affiliates Program** and hosted by the student organizations within the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

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