Temple's Association for Computing Machinery

By Colton Howard, CIS '16, President of Temple University ACM

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The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is an international learned society for computing. It was founded in 1947 and is the world's largest scientific and educational computing society. It is a not-for-profit professional membership group. ACM has more than 100,000 members and is headquartered in New York. ACM serves as the umbrella organization for all other American academic and scholarly interests in computing.

On a daily basis, Temple's ACM reflects the high ideals of this national association. Temple's ACM is dedicated to the academic, professional and social growth of each and every student interested in expanding their computing knowledge or interested in a career in technology.

Professional Development

We have companies from all over knocking on our doors because they recognize the talented people here at Temple. Companies such as Google, IBM, JP Morgan, Protiviti, and Twitter are recognizing the talent that we have here at Temple. More and more companies are giving opportunities to our students and investing in their futures. ACM has been the facilitator for connecting students to these companies. Every Tuesday, ACM hosts presentations from companies in which representatives discusses their companies culture as well as opportunities for the students to intern, get jobs, and network with professionals.

Many of these representatives make clear that the number one thing they look for is extracurricular activity. They want to see that students are active in the technology community, not just in school. Companies are attracted to those involved in ACM because of our commitment to technology, not only in our school's program, but the community as well.

ACM goes beyond just providing opportunities to obtain internships and network with companies. ACM is an organization that is genuinely dedicated not only to students' professional success but their person as well. We are working not only to help Temple's CIS program to grow but to reach out and help the local community.

Community Service

Last year our chapter focused on a few community service projects, including Computers for Kids and ACM Tech Day. The ACM Tech Day was a continuous effort to expand academic and professional knowledge of computing across all fields of education. To encourage students of Mastery Charter Shoemaker Campus to pursue a career in technology, ACM hosted four workshops including: "National Society of Black Engineers," "Professional Necessities in Tech," "Building an Application," and "Programming for the Future." The format was a workshop event which occurred four times during the school year, hosted at the school itself. One of our workshops, for example, involved an officer from ACM giving a speech regarding his work experience and how his education has impacted his job performance. These workshops benefit the attending students by encouraging them to pursue a college degree in technology and giving them a glimpse of the developing aspects in computer science.

While the ACM Tech Day is an event that occurs every semester, we also participated in a year-long fundraising effort to donate computers to underprivileged high school students called "Scholarship for Computers." We had the opportunity to travel to local high schools around the area and talk to kids interested in computer science about pursuing a college degree. We found there were a lot of talented students, but many did not own their own computers. For many students, not having a computer can dissuade them from pursuing a college degree. To combat this issue, ACM started "Scholarship for Computers" to provide laptops to children who do not own them. We raised enough money to provide three computers for students.

In order to receive a computer, a student had to submit an application and if they meet the requirements, including being a graduating senior, be applying to college or having already been accepted to college, having excellent academic standing, an outstanding character, and at least a 2.5 GPA, they are eligible. The application also consists of a written section where students discuss two high school activities and describe an accomplishment related to one of those activities. Students are also asked to describe what role technology plays their lives, how a computer would benefit their college career, and why they deserve this scholarship.

Temple's ACM chapter is committed not only to student's social, academic and professional life here at Temple but also the community in which we live. It is our vision that if we can provide for at least one student, that is one small step to placing that child on the path to accomplish great things. Instructors integrate the use of laptops more and more into their high school and college curriculum. Laptops help facilitate the ability to learn independently, collaborate with peers to accomplish work, and communicate the conclusions of your work with others.

To extend what we accomplished last year we are also collaborating with the nonprofit "Tech Girlz." A huge issue in the field of technology is the lack of women involved. Some of the greatest influencers in technology have been women, yet there are still significantly fewer women than men in the field. We will be hosting several events along with Tech Girlz this year dedicated to encouraging women not only go to college, but to also pursue an academic career in a technology field.

Social

Networking is extremely important in computer science and ACM helps members to network. The people in ACM become close friends, study group members, and business partners. From networking events to meet your teacher nights, ACM is an extremely valuable resource for those who want to invest in their social network.

ACM will be hosting many social events this year. We are planning LAN parties, but not the old-fashioned way where you link the computers up. We are going to be hosting a lot of game nights – with pizza of course – where we will play League of Legends, Super Smash Brothers, board games, and much more. We provide free tickets to the reel and host game nights at the game center at the Student Center. We also came out with Temple ACM tee shirts this year. At the end of the semester we host a variety of events where students can gather to study or just take a break through events such as ice cream socials, Jeopardy, and game night.

Academic

Lastly we are committed to providing other opportunities within the computer science department where students will be able to connect with their favorite teachers as well as get help with assignments that they have been struggling with. We have an office in the department and the door is always open if any student wants to come by to get help with anything related to technology or just want to stop by to talk and hang out.