Dear Faculty, Students & Alums,

We have come to the end of a difficult and unpredictable year, together. A lot have happened during the later half of year 2020. In such a difficult time, the students and faculty of CUNY GC's Computer Science Department have demonstrated great resilience in dealing with unprecedented challenges. After a long overdue, this newsletter highlights the achievements of our students and faculty, who are finding success even during these turbulent times. Below is a summary of many exciting events and news happened in the department over the past half a year. Hope you find them interesting and encouraging! In closing, we want to reiterate our gratitude for your continued support, and we wish you and your loved ones Happy Holidays and a healthy, safe, and prosperous 2021! Hope to see you in person sometime soon.

**NEWS & EVENTS**

**2020 Student Poster Competition Results:** The winners are **Bilal AbdulRahman** for “Social Distancing Using Deep Learning and 3D Computer Vision” and **Dr. Zhigang Zhu & Steven Alsheimer** for “Structure from Motion with Space Carving and MaskRCNN Segmentation” which looks at different segmentation techniques to develop a simpler 3D modeling workflow that does not require a studio. Dr. Zhigang Zhu explores using CCTV footage to measure social distancing between pedestrians by using the object detection deep neural network YOLO and planar homography. Congratulations to the winners! Thank you everyone who participated.

**Professor Susan Epstein elected to AAAI Executive Council:** Professor Susan Epstein was elected to a three-year term as a councilor of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI). The 12-person executive council, in conjunction with AAAI's president, serves to shape the world's AI research agenda, advance education, formulate ethical policy, and interact with governments.
**GC CS Community Event:** The Computer Science department hosted our annual community event to showcase their research and present 15 papers from Ph.D. students who have published their works in the past academic year and we welcomed five new faculty members to our department.

**Kei Nemoto won 2nd prize at Lumiata COVID-19 Global AI Hackathon:** We are delighted to know that our Data Science student Kei Nemoto's software that helps searching for COVID-19 Scholarly articles secured the second prize at the Lumiata COVID-19 Global AI Hackathon.

**Professor Raffi Khatchadourian received EAPLS best paper award at FASE 2020:** Professor Khatchadourian along with Yiming Tang, Mehdi Beherdezeh, and Baishakhi Ray received the EAPLS best paper award at the 2020 International Conference on Fundamental Approaches to Software Engineering (FASE ’20) for their paper entitled, “An Empirical Study on the Use and Misuse of Java 8 Streams”

**Distinguished Professor Yingli Tian named 2020 IAPR Fellow:** The International Association of Pattern Recognition has elected YingLi Tian as 2020 IAPR Fellow. Dr. Tian is CUNY Distiguished Professor and her research interests include computer vision, machine learning, artificial intelligence, assistive technology, medical imaging analysis, and remote sensing.

**Professor Lev Manovich's Cultural Analytics book published by MIT Press:** This new book by Dr. Lev Manovich brings together his insights from running the Cultural Analytics lab since 2007, directing over 40 cultural data projects, and teaching practical courses in data visualization, data science, and digital culture for many years.

**Invited Distinguished Speaker Talk - Securing Cyber-Physical and IoT Systems in Smart Living:** Guest speaker Prof. Sajal Das (Professor and Daniel St. Clair Endowed Chair) from Missouri University of Science and Technology hosted an online talk on Securing Cyber-Physical and IoT Systems in Smart Living. The talk highlighted on unique research challenges in securing CPS and IoT systems that are extremely vulnerable to failures, attacks and security threats, followed by novel defense mechanisms.

**PHD Program Admission's Deadline Jan. 15th 2021**

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Dear all,

The past year has been unusual, in some cases devastating, for everyone. However, one of the important things that Covid19 pandemic has highlighted is the robustness and criticality of the general field of Computer Science and Technologies. It is the Computer Networks that keep human world still connected, it is the remote education applications that still give our children a chance of study, and it is the Data Science research and tools that analyze and track down the spread and trend of the virus efficiently. The field of Computer Science and Technologies is now essential to human society and matters most to social mobility as the job market of US already observes more than half of occupations being computer related. I am proud to say that we – the CUNY Computer Science community have endured that responsibility for the big metro area of New York successfully.

In this letter, I’d like to Thank You for your support over the years as a former student, faculty or a friend, who have studied and researched hard in the CS field, who have helped us – the CUNY Graduate Center’s Computer Science department through building great reputations, helping our students for research projects and getting interns/jobs, and supporting the program in many other ways.
If you have ever studied or worked at the CUNY GC’s CS program, you must know how scarce our resource is. The unique funding structure of the GC has constrained our capacity of receiving funding that we deserve, and has been a deciding factor to add to the disheartening disproportion between what we receive and what we have delivered. But with that constrain, we still see our newly launched Data Science master's program doubling its enrollment over a short two-years period and attracting hundreds of perspective students to apply; our doctoral students have still published numerous high-quality papers in top professional conferences and journals year after year; our faculty members have won world-recognizing awards and published influential books continuously!

We have done these, even with the poor support of CUNY and GC, thus imagine what more we could do if more resources were provided? Therefore, I would like to humbly ask for your further support by donating to the GC CS department fund. Your contribution will help us to: Support the dramatically increasing enrollment interests in both the Computer Science PhD program and the Data Science Master's program run at the GC CS department; Provide Research Assistant-ship funding to doctoral and master’s students who are under-resourced due to a variety of reasons; Facilitate and promote faculty research and advisement activities at GC CS; Obtain facility, equipment, devices, supplies to accommodate student and faculty research and teaching; And much more.

So please consider contribute to the CS program by scanning the following QR code, which leads to the designated donation account to the GC CS department, or by using this URL: https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Support-the-GC/Program-Donations/Computer-Science. Thank you for helping us sustain excellence at the Computer Science department of CUNY Graduate Center as we navigate these challenging times. I am so grateful for each and every one of you and for the honor it is to lead this remarkable department. Please HELP US TO MAKE YOU PROUD!