Texas A&M University’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering held its second annual summer camp, ECE Unplugged, hosting 30 high-school students. ECE Unplugged, showcases the different opportunities available for students in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

During the camp, the high-school students had access to the labs and equipment including oscilloscope’s and soldering machines and built speakers, etched a wafer similar to making microchips, built an antenna out of a can and built robots as some of their projects during the camp.

They also were given an industry tour of National Instruments in Austin as part of the camp experience.

“The camp is aimed to help participants understand what they can do with degrees in electrical or computer engineering,” said Jackie Perez, the department’s senior undergraduate academic advisor.

Faculty members Dr. Jean-Francois Chamberland, Dr. Kamran Entesar, Dr. Paul Gratz, Dr. Rusty Harris, Dr. Gregory Huff, Dr. Deepa Kundur, Dr. Sam Palermo, Dr. Srinivas Shakkottai and Dr. Steve
Dr. Robert Balog joined the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in 2009 as an assistant professor. He received the B.S. degree in electrical engineering from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey in 1996 and the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2002 and 2006 respectively. From 1996 to 1999, Balog was an engineer at Lutein Electronics, Cooperstown, PA, and from 2006 until 2009, he was a senior engineer at SolarBridge Technologies Inc., Champaign, IL. While at SolarBridge, he lead a team of more than 10 engineers and consultants and was responsible for the research and development of a transformative technology in the power electronics inverters of a photovoltaic (solar) energy system. He holds three issued U.S. patents with seven additional U.S. patents pending and is a registered professional engineer. He was the first Fellow of the IEEE and received research grants from both the National Science Foundation (NSF) and industry to work on systems engineering problems for cost-effective and reliable integration of large-scale renewable energy resources. His research was featured in MIT Technology Review (Oct. 2010). Xie is affiliated with the Electric Power and Power Electronic Group in the department. Balog joined the University of British Columbia, presented the fourth lecture of the Texas A&M at Qatar Distinguished Lecture Series in January 2010 as an assistant professor. In addition to participating in hands-on activities, the students toured departmental laboratories such as the Magnetic Resonance Systems Laboratory, Chip Fabrication Laboratory and Thin Film Laboratory. Participants also toured the campus and learned some of the Texas A&M traditions and attended presentations on research in computer and electrical engineering. They also enjoyed some recreational activities such as the Rec Center, Mount Agle and a BV Bomber baseball game.

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**International Conference on Telecommunications comes to the Middle East**

Texas A&M at Qatar in collaboration with Qatar University and Qatar University Wireless Innovation Center, hosted the International Conference on Telecommunications (ICT2010) in April. The conference featured advances in the changing world of wireless technology, offering tutorials and hands-on activities, the students toured departmental laboratories such as the Magnetic Resonance Systems Laboratory, Chip Fabrication Laboratory and Thin Film Laboratory. Participants also toured the campus and learned some of the Texas A&M traditions and attended presentations on research in computer and electrical engineering. They also enjoyed some recreational activities such as the Rec Center, Mount Agle and a BV Bomber baseball game.

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**U.S. News & World Report ranks Texas A&M’s electrical & computer engineering programs**

The Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering’s graduate and undergraduate programs at Texas A&M University were among the top schools ranked nationally according to the U.S. News & World Report’s release of America's best graduate and undergraduate schools for 2010-2011. For undergraduate schools, electrical engineering is ranked 18th overall and 9th among public schools. Specialty rankings are based on nomination by educators at peer schools, with the department heads asked to judge the overall academic quality of programs in their field on a scale of 1 (“marginal”) to 5 (“outstanding”), and the average scores were used for rankings. For graduate schools, electrical engineering is ranked 22nd among 185 Ph.D.-granting engineering schools and 14th among public schools. Computer engineering is ranked 20th overall and 13th among public schools.

In addition, the graduate engineering program at Texas A&M was ranked 13th nationally (7th for public institutions.) This is up from 14th nationally and 8th for public institutions the previous year. For more information, see www.usnews.com.

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**2009/2010 Annual Fund Donors**

The Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering at Texas A&M University would like to thank the following supporters for their contributions to our Annual Fund. This fund was established for scholarships, recruiting and other items not covered by state or tuition in order to compete for the retention of the finest students and faculty. Support of our annual fundraising campaign in the past six years has been very helpful to the growth of the department.
Another thing is keeping the network powered. The sender handles large amounts of data, which can include visual and audio components. Communicating such complex data requires a lot of power, but not necessarily constant power, because of dynamic changes. In turn, this leads to an exponential climb of energy consumption and data sharing efficiency in wireless networks. The key is how to keep these networks powered so that the battery life is sufficiently long.

“Don’t want these systems to just get data. We need them to analyze data and act on it one day too. If someone falls down, emergency services do not need to know who the person was wearing when he or she fell. The angle of his head, the location of the fall, all these things are in the medical record. But engineering complex surveillance systems that smarten up the environmental infrastructure is a challenge. There are security, efficiency and privacy issues to consider. Tackling these issues is Dr. Deepa Kundur, an associate professor at Texas A&M’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. She is analyzing lightweight algorithms that could help improve DSMNs.

Kundur says that traditional communications using free space optics is one technology currently being considered for advanced surveillance because of its high data capacity suitable for real-time video communications. One major problem facing directional communications for DSMNs is ensuring connectivity of such networks. For instance, if a sensor node or “sink” cannot communicate with the others, its information may get lost.

“Security translates into safety, but efficiency is important too,” Kundur said. “Achieving a balance between safety and security will help improve DSMNs.”

Contributed by Marissa Dahl

Tiny Funnels, Huge Advances

Imagine a tiny funnel—a small so that individual molecules can go through it at a time. That’s the basic idea behind research being done on molecules that play a role in the growth of cancer cells. Dr. Jun Kameoka, an assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering in the Dwight Look College of Engineering, and his colleague, Dr. Mien-Chie Hung of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, are working in a new specialty called bio-nanotechnology which involves the design and manufacture of nano- and micro-structures that are designed to sense and manipulate biological molecules. The researchers have developed a NanoChannel Protein Complex Detection System which detects multiple protein interactions (some involve two proteins and some involve up to eight proteins) and disconnects the dynamics and complexity of cancer-related signal pathways that are involved in diseases ranging from cancer to diabetes.

They are also working on detecting protein complexes from cancer patients at M.D. Anderson in order to better understand the nature of the molecular interactions that make up the protein complex of which it is a part. The method promises to yield a lot of information that can be applied in developing new cancer drugs.

In Kameoka and Hung’s new system, nanochannels—some as small as three nanometers in diameter—are directed, one at a time, into these nanochannels. Kameoka and his colleague have created fluorescent nanowires which detect specific fluorescent signals from target molecules passing through the nanotubes. Those signals reflect the specific identity of the single molecule in the nanochannel at a given moment—and can be used to study the interactions of that molecule with other proteins in the nanochannel. Kameoka and Hung’s system is designed to detect the single, specific fluorescent signal reflected by only one type of target molecule and then report that same signal in a single nanochannel.
Joe Utay, a graduate of the Department of Electrical Engineering, was posthumously named a Distinguished Alumnus by the Association of Former Students.

Utay, Class of 1908, received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Texas A&M University and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in 1912. As a student, he was a member of the Corps of Cadets, Ross Volunteers, the “T” Association, the Athletic Council and the Dallas Club and was captain of the varsity football team.

Utay returned to Texas A&M in 1912 and served as a freshman football coach and was director of athletics. He is recognized as a pioneer of football in the Southwest. He was the first president of the Texas Official Association from 1912 until 1936 and was instrumental in establishing the Texas Official Association, which helped organize the Cotton Bowl Athletic Council. Utay worked as a practicing attorney in Dallas for more than 55 years.

Utay was inducted into the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame in 1972 and the Texas A&M University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1974. He was a founding member of the Texas A&M Alumni Association and a charter member of the National Football Hall of Fame.

Utay served as president of the A&M Board of Directors (now the Board of Regents) from 1935 to 1941. He was a contributor to The Association of Former Students’ Centennial Uly (Utay Hall) is named in his honor.

Other recipients of the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award include:

- Dudley J. Hughes, Class of 1951, of Jackson, Miss.
- Charles W. Solis, Class of 1955, of Houston, a mechanical engineering graduate;
- Dr. Fred A. Palmer, Class of 1959, of Godley, Texas;
- Dr. Don H. Davis, Jr., Class of 1961, of Sedona, Ariz., a mechanical engineering graduate;
- William H. “Bill” Flores, Class of 1976, of Bryan, Texas;
- Texas A&M University and The Association of Former Students also recognized another recipient posthumously:
- Robert L. Ackler, Jr., Class of 1963.

Established in 1962, the Distinguished Alumnus Award is the highest honor bestowed upon a former student of Texas A&M University. Since its inception, 197 individual recipients have contributed to their professions, Texas A&M and their local communities.

This tremendous class of Distinguished Alumnus exemplifies what is possible with a degree from Texas A&M University,” said Texas A&M President Dr. R. Bowen Loftin, Class of 1971. “Even more impressive than their individual accomplishments, however, is that they have based their lives on the core values that are interwoven into each and every Aggie. These former students are true exemplars of the Aggie Spirit, strong in their faith and country, and as well around the world.”

The Association of Former Students will further honor Texas A&M University’s 2010 Distinguished Alumnus in formal events and ceremonies throughout the year. The Association honored all recipients of this award during its annual Distinguished Alumnus Gala October 15. In addition, the 2010 recipients were hosted for dinner by Loftin and recognized during the Texas A&M football game against Missouri October 16.

The Association of Former Students, established in 1879, is the official alumni organization of Texas A&M University. The Association connects the nearly 500,000 members of the worldwide Aggie Network with each other and the University, and provides more than $6.4 million a year in impact to University scholarships, awards, activities and enrollments. The Association of Former Students also recognizes other recipients of the Distinguished Alumnus Award and The Association of Former Students, visit http://tamunews.tamu.edu/2010/04/09/texas-am-university-announces-2010-distinguished-alumni/.
S.R. Bhattacharyya
Dr. Shankar Bhattacharyya, along with Anikrit Bhatt, and J.L. Keel, have written a book and comprehensive graduate textbook in the area of Control Engineering. Bhattacharyya has also published an average of 20 refereed journal papers each year, and his work has been published in more than 200 refereed journals.

E.D. Brockett Professorship Award
Dr. Karen Butler-Purry received the E.D. Brockett Professorship Award for her outstanding contributions to advanced control theory to be applied to multivariable systems that will enable faster and more efficient computational and control processing. She is author of 14 books and more than 200 journal publications.

M. Ehsani
Dr. Shankar Bhattacharyya, along with S.P. Bhattacharyya, authored a book on the theory and application of switched reluctance motors (SRMs). The book, published by McGraw-Hill, is translated into Chinese. He also developed an entire area of advanced switched reluctance motors (SRM) drives, for which he is internationally known. His original ideas, inventions, and patents have been licensed and commercialized in the industry, with more than 100 refereed journal and conference papers, and three books. Ehsani is a Fellow of IEEE and is translated into Chinese. He also developed an entire genre of research in electric drives for electric vehicles, and is recognized as an expert in SRM technology. He is also a member of the IEEE-Solid Circuit Council, and has been a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Electrical Engineering and Electrical Systems.
His research interests are in the areas of autonomous systems, grid architecture, data analytics, and cross-talk avoidance in on-chip buses, leakage-power reduction, power circuit design, asynchronous circuit design, and power-aware design techniques. He is the recipient of the NSF CAREER Award and a Young Investigator. He has been the recipient of the Best Paper Award from the IEEE Communications Society in 2006, he joined the board of editors for high-speed optical and electrical I/O architectures.

Dr. Christi Madsen received a NSF Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) for her work in optical engineering. She holds two patents in the field of biomedical imaging. She has published articles in leading optical and biomedical engineering and has served as a reviewer for major journals in the field of biomedical imaging.

Dr. B.D. Russell has been promoted to the rank of Professor in the department. He obtained his Ph.D. from MIT in 1990 and has been a member of the faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) since April 1991. He has been a member of the faculty at UIUC since 1991 and has been a member of the faculty at UIUC since 1991. He received the NSF CAREER Award in 1994 and was named an IBM Faculty Award in 1999. He received the NSF CAREER Award in 1994 and was named a Fellow of the IEEE in 2002. He received the NSF CAREER Award in 1994 and was named a Fellow of the IEEE in 2002.

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S. Wright

Dr. Steven M. Wright was elected to the ranks of Fellow "for contributions to parallel magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) systems and for teaching." He is a professor in the Department of Radiology and Biomedical Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he has been a faculty member since 1983. His research focuses on the development and application of parallel MRI systems. He is a fellow of the IEEE and the American Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. Wright is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

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Two ECE students selected as Who’s Who Among Students at Texas A&M

CURRENTS • Fall 2010

Two ECE students selected as the 2009-2010 Who’s Who Among Students at Texas A&M. Before transferring to Texas A&M, Tambe attended Navarro College, in Corsicana, Texas where he was inducted as life member of Phi Theta Kappa. He’s been a student member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) since 2007, and is currently serving as the service chair of the Texas A&M chapter of Eta Kappa Nu. He also is a Texas A&M ECE undergraduate student ambassador, assisting the ECE department in high school recruiting and freshman retention programs.

ECE undergraduate student receives Microsoft scholarship

An undergraduate student in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering was named a Microsoft Scholar for the summer of 2010 from Texas A&M University. Shell Zhang, an international student from China, received the scholarship from Microsoft for the 2009-2010 school year.

This scholarship, according to Zhang, was the first time we had applicants from all across North America, “said Rian Sammy, director of the university’s Office of International Students and Scholars. Zhang arrived to The Woodlands, Texas in Fall of 2007. He is currently a sophomore at Texas A&M majoring in computer engineering.

ECE undergraduate student named Gathright Award winner

An undergraduate student in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering was named winner of the Gathright Award. However, this year’s winner, Aniruddha B. Saket, an electrical engineering major, is currently continuing his education, pursuing a master’s degree in electrical engineering.

ECE Students Receive Prestigious GCPA Scholarship

Sarah Emich (left) and Nahomi Morales (right) from the department received a Gulf Coast Power Association (GCPA) Scholarship. Emich started college as an applied mathematics sciences major, but after working for an electrical contracting firm she changed her mind and switched to electrical engineering. She became interested in power grid during her senior year while working for Walker Engineering, Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas. She is currently working for a scholarship on electric grid coordination. After graduation, Emich will return to the electrical construction industry and work to get her P.E. license or attend a graduate school at Texas A&M.

Morales is a senior electrical engineering student from The Woodlands. Her research interests include protection and control as an intern for Entergy Corporation and Chevron Corporation. During his sophomore year, Morales was named a Microsoft Scholar. Morales has been involved with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE).

ECE Grad nominated for Marshall Scholarship

Jacob McDonald, a graduate student in the department, has been nominated for the prestigious Marshall Scholarship. The Marshall Scholarship is tenable for two years of study at any university in the United Kingdom. More than 1,000 students apply and approximately 40 are chosen. McDonald, of Denton, completed his bachelor’s degree in three years. He has been an intern at Eta Kappa Nu and Tau Beta Pi honor societies and has played for the Texas A&M club soccer team. He has interned at Sandia National Labs and Raytheon. He is also the author of several conference papers on radio antennas for biomedical applications. If chosen as a Marshall Scholar, he will study for a Master of Philosophy degree in technology and innovation management at the University of Sussex.

ECE graduate student wins prestigious university award

An ECE graduate student is among eight students who have been named the Texas A&M University Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges award. The Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges award is one of the most prestigious awards offered by Texas A&M to its students. The selection was done by a committee formed by the Vice President Student Affairs. The selection committee consisted of faculty, staff and students.

Chaudhry is a member of IEEE, INFORSYS and he was selected as a member of the Pinnacle National Honor Society by Texas A&M. Other honors include session winner and tax- onomy level second place prize at Texas A&M’s Student Research Week 2008, session winner and taxonomy level second place prize at Texas A&M’s Student Research Week 2008 and he received a grant to attend the workshop “Next Generation Networks” at the Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science (DIMACS) at Rutgers University. His research interests include security in e-commerce and its applications, algorithmic and information-theoretic aspects of network- ing and algorithm design.
ECE student receives achievement award

Rachel Oyler, an undergraduate student in the department, was recipient of the Craig C. Brown Outstanding Senior Engineer Award from The Dwight Look College of Engineering. Oyler is an electrical engineering major from Sun- down, Texas. She is a member of the Tau Beta Pi, Eta Kappa Nu and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies, and the Society of Women Engineers.

Oyler has been a leader in her sorority, Gamma Phi Beta, earning two of its highest awards for exemplifying the core values of love and learning. Since 2005 she has continued to volunteer at a local camp for handicapped, disabled and terminally ill children. Her summers at Texas A&M have been well spent, including a summer internship with The Boeing Company’s International Space Station electrical power system group, Study Abroad in Italy and a summer internship with the IT Design Systems group at Texas Instruments.

She is repeatedly described as exceptionally intelligent and an outstanding leader and role model with a superb work ethic and enviable time management skills—a person who exemplifies the honor and tradition of Texas A&M.

Also honored were seniors Colin Bailie, Mark Deimund, Alexandra (Sandra) Iacob and Rodrigo Garza Urquiza. All received the annual award due to their academic achievement, character and leadership abilities.

Each of the seniors received an engraved medallion and a $5,000 educational grant. Their names appear on a plaque in the Zachry Engineering Center.

The Engineering Faculty Senior Award was renamed the Craig C. Brown Outstanding Senior Engineer Award in 1996 in recognition of Brown’s endowment for the award. He received the award as a Class of 1975 civil engineering senior. Currently, Brown is chief operating officer, owner and president of Bray International Inc. as well as chairman and president of the Craig and Galen Brown Foundation.

Gifts and Endowment Information

Gifts and endowments help in attracting and educating top quality students, rewarding and retaining top quality faculty and promoting the growth of the department. We would be delighted to discuss further with you how to make a gift or establish an endowment in your own name or the name of a loved one. Endowments may also take the form of naming a laboratory or the department. Gifts of any size may also be made to the Electrical & Computer Engineering Development Fund to help the growth of the department.

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Ags win cyber defense regional

A team of Texas A&M Aggies won the Sixth Annual Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition (CCDC), among them was several computer engineering students.

The team members were Travis Carr (general studies); Nick Mai (computer engineering, electrical engineering track); Captain Matthew Mullins (computer engineering); Luke Murray (computer engineering, computer science track); Ankur Nandwani (computer science and engineering graduate student); Robert “Red” Schumacher (computer engineering, computer science track); Kyle Willmon (computer science); and Sandeep Yadav (computer engineering graduate student).

This is Texas A&M’s fifth win of the Southwestern Regional Competition.

During his opening address, Willis Marti, director of networking at Texas A&M and competition host said, “This competition is all about defense. Attackers only need one good day, but defenders are charged with constantly protecting the network.”

CCDC is truly a defensive competition. Teams of eight students are given a “corporate” network of computers and asked to defend it from the Red Team, network security professionals that act as attackers. In addition to defending the network, student teams must maintain the services needed for a business to run, and complete tasks requested by “Management.”

This competition required detailed network planning to create seven identical networks and integrate them into the central network for scoring.