Feb. 29, 2016

Dear members of the Hajim School community:

**Jose Perez**, a third-year graduate student in The Institute of Optics, has been **selected to attend the Catalyzing Advocacy in Science and Engineering (CASE) workshop** in Washington, D.C., April 17-20. Sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the workshop gives upper-class undergraduate and graduate students an **opportunity to learn about Congress, the federal budget and appropriations processes, and tools for effective science communication and civic engagement**. They also form teams and conduct meetings with their elected members of Congress and congressional staff members, putting into practice what they have learned. The goal: to **empower them to become a voice for basic research throughout their careers**. Given the uncertainties we've experienced with federal research funding in recent years, it is clear we need many such voices. Congratulations, Jose!

Congratulations as well to two other computer science faculty members who have **received Google Faculty Research Awards** this round, in addition to Michael Scott, whose award was mentioned in a previous memo. **Dan Gildea's project** involves decipherment, which means **learning to translate between languages for which we don't have existing translated documents in both languages**. "Most current machine translation systems are based on learning statistical patterns from translated documents," Dan explains. "For pairs such as Chinese-English there are millions of words of such documents available, but for the majority of the world's languages (say, Bengali-English) we only have monolingual text in each language. The project aims to learn correspondences even in this situation, taking advantage of the fact that, if two words co-occur frequently in English, their translations should co-occur in the foreign language."

**Ehsan Hoque** will use a sensing framework he developed through a previous Google Faculty Research Award to **develop an opportunistic browser-based videoconferencing system that non-intrusively offers nonverbal feedback after video sessions**. With consent of users, the system will intercept and analyze audio and video data for such communication dynamics as duration of turns, floor time, who interrupted who, aggregated smile intensity, patterns of pauses, speaking rate, loudness, and pitch. The goal is to provide feedback that adds value to the video conferencing experience. And depending on how many users consent to share data from their conferences, the system **could generate large scale, multimodal data** that could be "very helpful in **developing machine learning algorithms to push the boundaries of recognizing subtle nonverbal behavior**," Ehsan explains.

The Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning will host a **webinar entitled "Recognizing and Reducing Unintended Bias in the Engineering Classroom"** from **2 to 3 p.m. tomorrow, March 1, in Dewey 1-154**. The webinar can also be accessed through a home or office computer here. Kelly Cross, an engineering educator at University of Illinois, and Stephanie Goodwin, a social psychologist at Wright State University, will lead a discussion on examples of bias common in engineering, a bias-debriefing process, and resources for developing bias-reduction strategies. For more information, email jennifer.hadingham@rochester.edu.

The **Finger Lakes Region of the New York Business Plan Competition**, an intercollegiate business plan competition, is **accepting applications through March 13**. This competition is open to all levels of study and all majors and disciplines, not just business students. The contest is free to enter and a complete

business plan is not required. New this year, student teams must **submit applications via the online platform [Skipso](#)** . Start the process [here](#).

This month's **Mobile Meetup** sponsored by Alumni Relations is set up **specifically for Rochester engineering alumni**. The virtual networking hour, from **noon to 1 p.m. next Tuesday, March 8**, will allow alumni from all over the world to chat one on one. During the event you'll have the opportunity to enter one or more groups in which you can **connect with other alumni in Software Development, Manufacturing and Design, and Consulting**. Then, the speed networking begins: You will be randomly paired with fellow 'Jackets in your group for quick, text-based chats to exchange experiences and build your UR network. To register follow this [link](#).

As always, keep me updated, and have a great week.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Clark
Professor and Dean

HAJIM SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER