September 12, 2016

Dear members of the Hajim School community:

Robert Waag, emeritus professor of electrical and computer engineering, has made pioneering contributions to improving the resolution and clarity of ultrasonic images. In addition, long before terms like “translational medicine” and “bench-to-bedside” became the buzzwords they are today, Prof. Waag worked diligently to move his pioneering advances into clinics where they could help doctors and patients. It was my great honor to present the Hajim School Lifetime Achievement Award to Prof. Waag at our annual reception last week. (Read more here.) Please join me in congratulating Prof. Waag on a remarkable career that sets a fine example for all of our students and faculty.

It was also my honor to recognize Eileen Pullara, the administrator in the Department of Computer Science since 2003, for her 45 years of overall service to the University. This represents an incredible amount of service, not only in the number of years, but the outstanding quality of work that Eileen has done.

Here’s another example of translating our research in ways that help doctors and patients. Three teams of researchers, including Stephen McAleavey and Mark Buckley of biomedical engineering; Zeljko Ignjatovic, Marvin Doyley, and Michael Huang of electrical and computer engineering; and Michael Richards of the Department of Surgery are collaborating with Carestream Health Inc. on developing new technologies to expand the use of ultrasound imaging for medical diagnosis. Diane Dalecki, BME’s department chair, describes this as a “dream match between a company in our own backyard and our researchers, who are eager to take the work they’re doing in the laboratory and translate it to people who are building the products that make a difference for patients and physicians.” You can read more about this project here.

Congratulations to Sandhya Dwarkadas, chair of computer science, who has received a National Science Foundation grant to enhance the efficiency of memory system access and management for shared code libraries. This will involve designing novel hardware and software to promote efficient access to shared code in a multi-tasking environment, in collaboration with Alan L. Cox, currently a professor at Rice University, who received his PhD in computer science here in 1991.

Congratulations as well to Zhiyao Duan, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, who received an NSF grant that will enable him to collaborate with investigators at Northwestern University on a novel way to search audio and video collections using vocal imitations or sounds that are similar to those being sought. This could have all kinds of applications — detecting gunshots or screams at automated police monitoring stations, alerting hearing impaired persons that their dogs are the ones barking, telling you your car needs a new starter motor, helping a movie sound producer quickly locate the noises of doors slamming from a database of thousands of sound effects. Awesome!
I like this quote from Maggie Curtis '17, a dual computer science and English major, who spent spring 2016 studying abroad in Budapest: “From learning about an entirely new culture as well as other cultures in different countries, to mastering how to navigate cities, study abroad taught me how to be an adult. While studying in college changes you and allows you to grow as a person, studying in an entirely different country removes any tethers you have to immaturity. You have to be smart, open-minded, and strong-willed to be separated from the world you know for nearly half a year. There isn't anything else like exploring the world and I am so glad I took the opportunity to go beyond my comfort zone.” You can read more about her study abroad experiences here.

Reminder: Be sure to register now for Meliora Weekend, Oct, 6-9. Headliner tickets are selling quickly. Enjoy a variety of entertainment including a barbecue picnic on the newly-dedicated Edmund A. Hajim ‘58 Science & Engineering Quad and the Hajim School Design and Innovation Showcase during the Scholar Showcase. Check out the full event schedule to plan for your weekend, and show your Meliora spirit by using #URMW16 on social media.

Have a great week!

Your dean,
Wendi Heinzelman