



Computer science education at DePaul turns 25

by Helmut Epp, dean of CTI

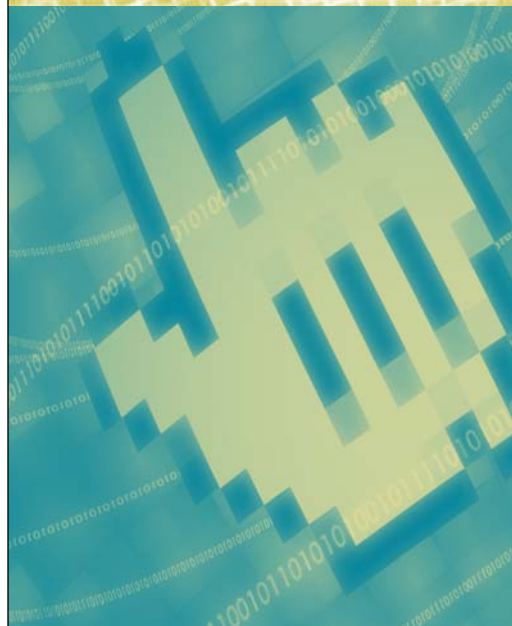
As we mark our 25th anniversary of teaching computer science and information technology at DePaul, we celebrate our successes and reflect on the many changes that have occurred over the years.

Within CTI, I am proud of the exciting new research our faculty has been conducting in the areas of security, criminology and health care informatics (just to name a few). To meet the needs of an ever-changing technology landscape, we have added new programs in a variety of areas, including digital cinema and information assurance. We also offer countless seminars and a wide variety of certificate programs designed to help you stay on top of the latest technologies.

In doing what we do best—educating individuals and preparing them for work in the 21st century—we have received a great deal of national recognition for our programs. For example, the federal government earlier this year recognized DePaul and CTI for the quality of its network security education programs. We were one of just eight universities designated as a national Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education.

As CTI's reputation has grown, students aren't the only ones who benefit. Alumni do, as well, because the value of their computer science degree also soars.

To celebrate our anniversary, we shine the spotlight on the successes that we are most proud of—our alumni. In this issue, we highlight just a few of the thousands of highly successful alumni we have helped educate over the last 25 years. >>>





VIRANI

AZIZ VIRANI (BS '83)

**Managing partner
Accenture**

When Aziz Virani landed a great job with Accenture

(then Arthur Andersen) right after graduation, he was thrilled. Twenty-two years later, he's even happier with the job that has taken him around the globe.

"I've seen the world, and that has done a lot in terms of my personal and professional growth," says Virani,

who lived in Europe for many years and could write a book on four-star hotels and first-class flights.

With a wife and two young children, he now tries to stay a little closer to his home in San Francisco, but his role as managing partner for technology and outsourcing in North America for the financial services practice keeps him on the road.

Virani sells systems integration and outsourcing of information technology (IT) to his clients, which include banks, insurance companies and capital markets. He also is responsible for the global technology practice in financial services, making sure the company has the best technology delivery capabilities.

Despite the long hours and the travel, Virani wouldn't have it any other way. "I enjoy working in the financial services industry," he says, adding that he loves the variety inherent in his work.

DePaul made it possible for Virani to earn a computer science degree at a time when "having a computer science degree was pretty much unheard of," he says. "That positioned me in the very front end of what turned out to be a big boom in the industry."



RUBINOW

STEVE RUBINOW (MS '86)

**Chief technology officer
Archipelago Holdings Inc.**

Steve Rubinow can't afford his system to be down for

even the few seconds that it takes you to read this sentence. Rubinow is chief technology officer for Archipelago Holdings Inc., the largest all-electronic stock exchange in the world, where success is measured in fractions of a second.

"We can't afford to have outages. We can't even afford to have slowdowns. Every millisecond counts in this business," he says. If online

traders detect even a hint of sluggishness in the system, they quickly begin trading with a competitor. "You have to be at your best all the time. There is very little room for error."

Eight-year-old Archipelago, which rocketed into prominence in an industry dominated by long-term players, is completing its acquisition of and integration with Pacific Exchange Inc. If that weren't enough, in April the firm announced that it is merging with the New York Stock Exchange.

Furthermore, Rubinow is developing Archipelago's "greenbacks for grids" project with Sun Microsystems. Expected to launch later this year, the system will allow companies to sell their excess computing capacity to interested organizations for defined periods, using Archipelago's trading technology.

Rubinow manages all this with a 120-person technology staff spread across four cities. The lean crew handles all of Archipelago's software development, security, quality assurance, architecture and two data centers, including a state-of-the-art center he built from the ground up.

He credits CTI with giving him the broad background that enables him to see the big picture as well as the technical issues: "That's what a good educational foundation provides."



LARSON

KEVIN LARSON (BS '87)

**Vice president and
chief information officer
AAR**

Kevin Larson had no idea what he wanted to do

with his life after graduating from high school.

So for several years, he built custom homes. But after the real estate market fell off in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he decided to go back to school. Majoring

in information systems seemed like a good idea because he could foresee a big demand for those skills in the future.

He worked full time as a computer operator and software programmer at night, took classes during the day and drove home to Oak Forest, Ill., to get a few hours of sleep. The hard work paid off for Larson, who now lives in Inverness, Ill., and is vice president and chief information officer at AAR. A New York Stock Exchange company, AAR provides a broad range of aviation support services worldwide, including supply chain management for airplane and engine parts distribution.

Larson has been with AAR for more than 12 years, and he loves his job. He especially enjoys “interacting with customers and partnering with the business leaders to win new business, and coming up with supply chain management solutions and other solutions that are business- and customer-driven.”

He is grateful for the technical and people skills he learned while studying computer science at DePaul, even though the field was still relatively new at the time. “It was a very hands-on program that was challenging and effective,” he says, noting that the training helped him in every position he has had over the years. “We studied and worked together, and that taught me a lot about the importance of teamwork and collaboration. That was very significant for my education.”



FALK

KAREN K. FALK (MS '88)
Vice president of worldwide operations & technology
The Northern Trust Co.

Karen K. Falk is a rarity.

As vice president of worldwide operations and technology at the Northern Trust Co., she is among a small group of women to hold prominent technology posts in corporate America.

Falk developed her interest in computer science while working on a B.S. in finance

and accounting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she took some courses in management information systems as part of a minor.

When she graduated in 1983, firms were hiring people with business degrees who had an aptitude for computer science. Companies were bringing them in as entry-level programmers, training them and having them work up the ranks on the technical side.

That's what happened to Falk. Her first job was working at USG Corp. as an entry-level COBOL programmer. “I liked it. It was logical. It was fun. It was very new at the time, and I thought that the longer term opportunity was good. There weren't a lot of people that had a business background and understood computers, too.”

Falk wanted to round out her formal education, so she decided to get a master's in computer science from DePaul. “It really gave me the essential foundation for understanding how systems are put together in a structured way,” she says. On top of that, much of the theory helped her learn how to break down ambiguous problems into manageable components in order to solve them. That has been “invaluable at various levels throughout my career.”



KALT

DAVID KALT (MS '95)
Co-founder and CEO
optionsXpress Holdings Inc.

David Kalt is having a very big year. The CEO of optionsXpress Holdings Inc. took his comprehensive online options and stock brokerage public in January of 2005, just five years after he co-founded the company.

Kalt says what sets optionsXpress apart from

competitors E*Trade and Ameritrade is that the firm has focused on the online options trader. The other companies offered some options capabilities as an “accommodation,” Kalt says. “While we are very good at stocks, bonds and mutual funds, we are exceptional at options.”

Kalt and his two partners built all of their systems from the ground up, ensuring highly scalable technology. He praised CTI for giving him a great base of knowledge on which to build. “Technologies,

programming languages and protocols continually change, but the theory behind it all—which I learned at CTI—is as relevant in 2005 as it was in 1992, when I started the program.”

The online brokerage industry is in a period of consolidation. Kalt says that optionsXpress, which has 135 employees, is on the lookout for possible acquisitions of complementary brokerage technology firms that can strengthen the company's position.

optionsXpress is the second business for Kalt. Fresh out of DePaul, he launched a travel-related software company and then sold it in 1998. As for his next move, Kalt says, “I'm very committed to this. In a short period of time, optionsXpress has become a \$1-billion company. I'm proud of what our team has done, and we're just getting warmed up in terms of our potential.”

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Alumni Success Stories (cont.)



ST. CLAIR

CAROLINE ST. CLAIR (Ph.D '00)
Assistant professor
of computer science
North Central College

Caroline St. Clair wouldn't dream of doing anything else for a living.

"I really just love teaching," says St. Clair, who is an assistant professor of computer science at North Central College in

Naperville, Ill. The Batavia, Ill., resident decided to pursue her doctorate so that she could secure a tenure-track position at a university.

St. Clair now teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in programming, databases, artificial intelligence and data mining. She and a fellow professor are in the process of putting together a bioinformatics course.

St. Clair cares about her students and helping them succeed, as is evidenced by the student-nominated distinguished teaching award that she won recently at North Central. She takes advising very seriously "because I think it's where you get a chance to mentor students at a completely different level—not just on academics but also life skills."

St. Clair says the biggest challenge she faces in her job is staying up-to-date in a rapidly changing field. "You have to really love to learn new things, and I do."

While working on her degree at CTI, she says she had a great advisor and was taught by "phenomenal" faculty. "They were always willing to help, and that just really sets the tone."

In fact, she thinks so highly of her CTI training that she says, "We (North Central College) have a master's program, too. So when students come to me, it's very hard to not say, 'Well, have you thought of DePaul?'"

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