The Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing

During the spring semester, something extraordinary happened. While I was at a Kernel Hacking event with Professor Tuba, I won a scholarship to attend the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing! Over the summer, the registration to the conference was made, as well as hotel and plane ticket reservations. I was so excited to be going to Houston. On October 14, the Conference took place at the George Brown Convention Center. 12,000 amazing people assisted the conference this year. Students, interns, employees, and founders of companies, were all in Houston.

Every morning, there was a different keynote speaker like Hilary Mason, founder of Fast Forward Labs and Manuela M. Veloso, Herbert A. Simon University Professor in the Computer Science Department at Carnegie Mellon University. Hilary Mason spoke about how she started her own company. Manuela Veloso spoke about her amazing work in robotics.

After keynotes, everyone was welcome to join any of the many presentations, workshops, or visit the Career Fair.

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I attended presentations on how to reduce battery life in human implants, on career development, and on successful women in government in tech, among others.

I also attended a machine learning workshop hosted by Microsoft. The workshop presented the process of using an EEG sensor to measure how brain signals behave when a person is answering the truth and when they are lying. Then, using an algorithm, a computer will tell if the person is telling the truth or lying, creating a lie detector!

Another great workshop was the hardware hackathon where teams of students were given paper, scissors, tape, copper tape, batteries, and LEDs. In 20 minutes each team had to create something with the given materials. My team made a two-piece bracelet/ring that, when in contact, will light up the LED under the flower. Other great ideas were also implemented from other teams. One team made a seat that when a person sat, an LED would light up. Another team made cubes with different LED colors in them. The game consisted of guessing the color of the LED as the cubes would light up as they were put on top of each other and were in contact with the battery.

At the Career Fair, there were many big companies such as Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Ebay, Intel, IBM Cisco, Bank of American, Visa, Harris Corporation, and many others. All recruiters were extremely nice and happy to interact with women in the computing field. At the Career Fair, I was invited to a networking event with Amazon where I got to talk to Amazonians, and take silly pictures with Cristal, a graduate student from North Carolina I met at the event.

At the end of the conference, there was a party at a baseball field. There were three different music spots, food everywhere, a mechanical bull, and inflatables... tons of fun!

The Grace Hopper Celebration was full of knowledgeable people, of fun, and mostly of memories. I think this is an experience that every student should have. For more information about the Grace Hopper Celebration, visit: http://ghc.anitaborg.org/

- Valentina Rendon, CE Senior
Steps to Land an Internship

With career fair behind us and many internship opportunities up for grabs, October was a prime month for securing summer plans. At this past recruitment season, I was lucky enough to find and accept an internship for next summer. From my personal experiences, it pays to be prepared and it is much less scary if you go into it with the right attitude. So here’s some tips that might help get you an internship.

My five steps to success:

1) Prepare your resume. Making sure your resume is up to date, formatted perfectly, and highlights your skills is absolutely important. Get your friends, supervisors, mentors, and professors to review your resume and mark it up. The Career Resource Center is also a wonderful resource for resume help, interview prep, and free resume paper at the least. You don’t need an appointment and can just walk into the CRC library and sign in.

2) Go to recruitment sessions! If you’re part of any organization pertaining to your major, they will probably offer recruitment sessions for different companies. You can make a good impression by asking questions, talking to the recruiters afterwards, and giving them your resume. It is helpful to see the same recruiters at multiple events so that they remember you. Go to as many pre-showcase events as possible because that’s where the real opportunities are.

3) Plan your Career showcase schedule. Career showcase is so large that it can be overwhelming and it’s extremely hard to make an impression when the recruiters are seeing hundreds of people in a few hours. My advice is to choose your top 5 companies, apply online, and research them beforehand. You will have a higher chance of success by focusing your efforts on only a few companies. Plan to get to Career showcase early and go to your top five companies booths first. Also, don’t forget to pick up the free swag!

4) Interview with a company. After recovering from a long day on your feet, you may be lucky enough to get the call to set up an interview. Most interviews are the day after or even 2 days after showcase. At the interview, it’s important to think about your experiences and be able to explain your resume clearly and concisely. Also, think about your answers to common interview questions beforehand and practice them with someone. Overall, just relax and treat it as normal conversation. Lastly, at the end of your interview, be sure to ask a few meaningful questions and get contact info so you can send a thank you email later.

5) You get an awesome internship! Hopefully you get your dream internship, but if not, you still had the experience and can learn from your mistakes. No matter what happens, Career showcase is a valuable experience and will prepare you for your future endeavors.

- Elise DuTreil, ME Junior
With the beginning of November, comes the beginning of registration. Spring 2017 registration is now slowly opening to the students here at UF based on their seniority. No matter if you are a veteran at maneuvering through registration season, or if you are new to it, it never hurts to get a few tips on how to sign up efficiently. Now it’s time to get those holds removed, and those emergency info cards updated! How to survive registration:

One credit, two credit, three credit, four.
Yes, you need 12 credits to maintain a full-time status, but be careful with what you sign up for. This may sound trivial, but many people underestimate the time commitment it takes to complete 3+ four credit courses. If you like making Sunday your lazy day, be sure to research your classes by emailing the professor offering it, or by talking to students who have completed the course recently. Get a feel of the time commitment necessary to be successful so that you don’t become that student who is turning in multiple assignments at 11:58pm Sunday night.

Practice some jigsaw.
Fire up Microsoft word or take out a pen and paper and create a chart of classes that you need to take next semester. Be sure to write down the section numbers and indicate what times each class is offered. Often, you’ll need to move a discussion section to make room for a core/critical tracking course. If the section you need at the time you want fills up, you may need to move a discussion from Wednesday to Tuesday, move your math class from period 6 to period 3, drop that jump roping class, and on, and on, and on… Moral of the story: plan ahead. Fitting all the pieces can get aggravating, especially if the courses are offered at awkward times.

Playing the wait game.
Many times what seems like the end of the world occurs. That dreaded “No available sections” taunts you on the registration page, and you just stare at the computer screen in disbelief. When this occurs, you’ll have 4 options.

Option 1 – Wait and press F5 repeatedly. Option 2 – Email the advisor about possible wait lists and/or possible openings of other sections. Option 3 – Email the professor who is offering the course about possible wait lists and/or possible openings of other sections. Option 4 – All of the above (my favorite).

Inception 2: prerequisite.
This is to all the newbies out there. Be sure to have a spider web, or a list of all the classes that are a prerequisite for another class. In certain majors there’ll be one class which is a prereq of a prereq of a prereq. Be sure to complete the first level and move onto the next, or else you risk graduating a semester late due to negligence.

- Emily Macon, CE Junior

Useful links:
Course listings:
http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/soc/201601/all/
https://one.uf.edu/soc/
Link to advisors:
http://www.ufadvising.ufl.edu/advisers.aspx
The article “Breakthrough Technologies of 2015” by MIT Technology Review introduces some of the exciting technological developments that will be available to us in just a few years.

My favorite is from a startup called Magic Leap. Their technology allows a realistic rendering of 3D animations… in real life!

Rachel Metz, one of the article’s writers, was able to control a 3D animation of a monster with a controller. She comments that “he’s not just visible at a set distance… with the press of a button I can make the monster smaller or larger, move him right or left, bring him closer, or push him further away.”

This breakthrough in 3D animation has a plethora of implications in the gaming, film, travel, and communications industry. According to the CEO of Magic Leap, this technology will be available for consumer products in 1-3 years.

Coupled with innovations in kinesthetic communication, the simulation of touch through the use of forces, vibrations, and motions, we are closer and closer to a fully immersive experience in the visual industry.

I’m mostly looking forward to Magic Leap due to its implications in gaming. My dream has always been to waste my life in virtual reality, and now I can’t believe I might be able to do that within a few years!

I’m sure some of you are wondering if the future will look like that of Fahrenheit 451, but what you should really be afraid of is the virtual monsters from games like Dead Space, spawning in your living room, crawling on to your lap and taking a big virtual bite of your appendages!

My hands have always been shaky when playing first-person shooters, monsters or no monsters, but soon the full on panic attacks I will experience will give me the steady hands I’ve always dreamed of.

But Magic Leap promises that the purpose of their 3D technology is to bring joy and magic to people. Somehow, I don’t believe that.

Sources:
http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/534971/magic-leap/
http://www.magicleap.com/#/blog

- Liz Dominguez, EE Senior