

## Volume 1, Number 4

### Featured Story

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#### Rensselaer, IBM, and New York State Unveil New Supercomputing Center



Photo Credit: Rensselaer/Kris Qua

On Friday, May 18, Rensselaer offered the first glimpse of what is planned to be the world's most powerful university-based supercomputing center. The Computational Center for Nanotechnology Innovations (CCNI), the result of a \$100 million partnership involving Rensselaer, IBM, and New York state, is designed to continue advancing semiconductor technology to the nanoscale, while also enabling key nanotechnology innovations in the fields of energy, biotechnology, arts, and medicine.

At the heart of the facility is an IBM Blue Gene supercomputer that will operate at more than 80 teraflops (trillion floating point operations per second). When fully operational, all of the components associated with the center will provide more than 100 teraflops of computing power. That amounts to about 15,000 calculations each second for every person in the world.

In an event at the Rensselaer Technology Park, the partners provided a sneak preview of the facility that will be at the heart of the center's capabilities. [Read more.](#)

### Honors and Awards

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#### Faculty

- **Petros Drineas** (Assistant Professor of Computer Science) received the Outstanding Early Research Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.
- **Henry Ehrlich** (Professor Emeritus of Biology) is listed in the 23rd Edition (2006) of *Marquis's Who's Who in the World*.
- **Peter Persans** (Professor of Physics) received the Outstanding Service Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.

#### Staff

- **Scott Dwyer** (Laboratory Supervisor, Physics) received the Outstanding Teacher Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.
- **George Edick** (Laboratory Supervisor, Biology) received the Outstanding Teacher Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.
- **Joan Perras** (Assistant to the Chair, Physics) received the Outstanding Staff Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.

#### Students

- **Jennifer Earle** (Undergraduate Student, Biology) received the Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.
- **Amanda Lund** (Graduate Student, Biology) received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.

- **Jordan Mader** (Graduate Student, Chemistry) received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the First Annual School of Science Awards Ceremony.

## Research Accomplishments

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- **Travis Desell** (Graduate Student in Computer Science), **Kaoutar El Maghraoui** (Graduate Student in Computer Science), **Boleslaw Szymanski** (Professor of Computer Science) and **Carlos Varela** (Assistant Professor of Computer Science), all of whom are members of the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking, coauthored a paper at the CCGrid 2007 conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil that was nominated for the best paper award.
- **James Ferris** (Director of the New York Center for Studies on the Origins of Life) organized a round table discussion on "Extraterrestrial Life" at the Philoctetes Center in New York City. The discussion included five participants and had an audience of about 75 people. The objective of the Philoctetes Center is to foster the study of imagination in science and other disciplines.
- **Jim Hendler** (Tetherless World Constellation Professor and Professor of Computer Science) was one of three keynote speakers at a symposium celebrating the 300th birthday of Carl Linnaeus, father of biological taxonomy, held at the Harvard Medical School Library.
- **Jim Hendler** (Tetherless World Constellation Professor and Professor of Computer Science) was asked to join the Informatics Advisory Group for the Encyclopedia of Life, a multimillion dollar, international project aimed at creating an interactive, web-based database cataloging and collecting information on all of the 1.8 million species that are named and known on planet Earth.
- **Boleslaw Szymanski** (Director of the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking and Professor of Computer Science) will co-chair the Program Committee for the First Conference of the International Technology Alliance in Networking and Information Science to be held in Washington, D.C. in September 2007. He will co-chair the conference with Dr. Kin Leung of Imperial College, U.K.
- **Boleslaw Szymanski** (Director of the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking and Professor of Computer Science) and **Gang Chen** (Postdoc in the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking) received a U.S. patent on a novel method for discrete event simulation.
- **Boleslaw Szymanski** (Director of the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking and Professor of Computer Science) and **Jim Hendler** (Tetherless World Constellation Professor and Professor of Computer Science) are principal investigators in a new \$500K grant from the International Technology Alliance in Networking and Information Science, for fiscal year 2008, from the Army Research Office.
- **Boleslaw Szymanski** (Director of the Center for Pervasive Computing and Networking and Professor of Computer Science), **Heidi Newberg** (Associate Professor of Physics), **Carlos Varela** (Assistant Professor of Computer Science), and **Malik Magdon-Ismail** (Associate Professor of Computer Science) received an REU Supplement from the National Science Foundation for support of three undergraduate researchers.

## Other News

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- The Rensselaer Cisco Academy in the Computer Science Department co-hosted the Northeast Academy Conference for Cisco instructors on May 3 and 4, 2007 on the Rensselaer campus. Over 100 instructors from across the northeast attended the conference along with several guest speakers from Cisco Systems, Inc. To view the website for the conference click [here](#).
- The School of Science held its first annual School of Science Awards reception on May 3, 2007 in the Heffner Alumni House. Awards were presented for Outstanding Undergraduate Student, Outstanding Graduate Student, Outstanding Teacher, Outstanding Early Research, Outstanding Service, and Outstanding Staff. The winners of these awards are identified above. Concurrent with the reception was the Physics Department Second Annual Art Show, for which all participants received certificates of recognition.
- The Third New England Manipulation Symposium (NEMS) sponsored by the Computer Science Department was held June 1, 2007 on the Rensselaer campus. Jeff Trinkle, Professor and Head of Com-

puter Science, and I. Volkan Isler, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, organized the day-long symposium. The symposium included participants from Brown, Buffalo, Columbia, Harvard, MIT, Rensselaer, UMass-Amherst, and Union, among others. In addition to the formal presentations, participants were able to tour the robotics laboratories in the Computer Science Department. To view the website for the symposium click [here](#).

- Deborah McGuinness has accepted her offer to become a Constellation Professor in the Tetherless World Constellation and a Professor of Computer Science. Deborah will be moving to Rensselaer this summer from her current position at Stanford University.
- The number of freshmen next year in the School of Science is up by 53 (19%) to 339. The number of freshmen in IT next year is up 12 (110%) to 23.
- This year's cohort of seven new students in the Accelerated B.S./Ph.D. program is spending the summer doing rotations in faculty laboratories with the goal of selecting a faculty research advisor by the end of the summer. These students are supported this summer with funds from the Darrin's Scholars program.
- The IT Program sponsored an afternoon workshop during the second day of the Teaching and Learning Colloquium on May 15, 2007. The topic of this workshop was Group Learning and focussed on techniques for creating and managing groups and evaluating the work of individuals in groups. The workshop was well attended with an equal mix of faculty from within and outside the IT Program.

## Upcoming Events

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- Reunion 2007, June 7-10.
- Transfer Student Orientation, July 10, August 24
- Undergraduate Student Orientation, July 11-21, August 20-21
- Navigating Rensselaer and Beyond, August 21-26
- Fall Classes Begin, August 27

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This newsletter is prepared monthly and distributed to faculty, staff and students in the School of Science to keep everyone informed of accomplishments and events within the school. Corrections and items for the next newsletter should be sent to [spoon@rpi.edu](mailto:spoon@rpi.edu).

