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J. "Ram" Ramanujam Named Director of LSU's Center for Computation & Technology

By LSU Department of Research Communications

LSU has appointed J. "Ram" Ramanujam director of its internationally-renowned Center for Computation & Technology, or CCT, effective May 1. Ramanujam is the John E. and Beatrice L. Ritter Distinguished Professor in the Division of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at LSU.

"We are happy to announce that Ram Ramanujam will take the helm of CCT," said Vice Chancellor of Research & Economic Development K.T. Valsaraj. "I would like to offer my most sincere thanks to Guillermo Ferreyra and the rest of the search committee who worked hard to find the right person to lead CCT, as well as Jorge Pullin for serving as interim director, and Joel Tohline for his guidance and dedication during his time as director."

Ramanujam takes the place of Pullin, who held the position of interim director since Tohline, the previous director, retired from the university in December 2013. His appointment as director begins May 1, pending approval by the LSU Board of Supervisors.

"I am thrilled to accept the position of director of the Center for Computation and Technology at LSU, and excited to be a part of the great leadership team at LSU," said Ramanujam. "CCT and LSU have a bright future ahead and I look forward to working with the outstanding administration, faculty, staff and students. Thanks in large part to the current and past leadership at CCT and the enormous support provided by LSU, CCT brings unique research, tools and infrastructure based on information technology for fostering computation and information-enabled, multi-disciplinary research and education."

Ramanujam has been a faculty member at LSU since 1990, has held a joint faculty position at CCT since 2005 and has served as the Systems Science and Engineering Focus Area lead at CCT since 2011.

"Ram's diverse research and administration roles have provided him unique and valuable opportunities to work with colleagues across campus and around the world on large interdisciplinary projects," said Valsaraj. "Such experiences have also provided him with a deep understanding of the links between physical sciences and engineering, arts, humanities, information and computing, all of which are critical to CCT's mission and success."

He received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras in India and his master's and Ph.D. degrees in computer science from The Ohio State University.

His research interests are in compilers and runtime systems for high-performance computing, domain-specific languages and compilers for parallel computing, embedded systems and energy-aware computing systems. For more than 13 years, he has been a key participant in the National Science Foundation-funded Tensor Contraction Engine project involving chemists, physicists and computer scientists and engineers. He has also played a key role in the Pluto compiler project for automatic parallelization.

"I believe CCT has an important role in developing a highly skilled, diverse workforce with a view to advancing Louisiana's information- and computation-based economy," said Ramanujam. "Building on CCT's research and educational strengths, I expect to explore new strategic partnerships with industry that can support the state's economic development efforts towards growth and expansion of knowledge-based ventures."

One of the critical ventures to Louisiana's economic infrastructure in which the CCT expects to play a role is the digital media industry. A recent study by Loren Scott titled, "The Economic Impact of Louisiana's Entertainment Tax Credit Programs" showed that in calendar year 2012, digital media spending in Louisiana resulted in more than $25 million in sales at Louisiana firms, nearly $24 million in household earnings for state citizens and nearly 450 jobs. Such jobs require a skilled workforce trained in state-of-the-art technologies by expert faculty and practitioners, such as those found at CCT.

Since its inception, CCT has attracted more than $100 million in external funding, and for the last seven years brought in more money than it receives. Because of its critical mass of talent and technology, it has attracted some of the largest grants ever in the history of the Louisiana, like the $20 million Louisiana Alliance for Simulation Guided Materials Application, or *LA-SiGMA* grant, which brings LSU together with Grambling State, Louisiana Tech, Southern University and several universities in New Orleans, or the $4 million National Science Foundation grant supporting the upgrade of LSU's newest supercomputing cluster, SuperMIC, which will be capable of 1 quadrillion computations per second.

Publish Date:
03-17-2014

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