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New program, director in Center for Computation and Technology

[The Daily Reveille, LSU](#)

Center for Computation and Technology Director J. "Ram" Ramanujam's reach spans across University department and college lines, touching programs and research in nearly every discipline.

Ramanujam was selected as director of CCT in May after more than 20 years of experience as a faculty member at the University.

CCT's mission is to advance the economy and University through the use of technology, with the goal of increasing the University's competitiveness in research and curriculum development, Ramanujam said.

The University's Office of Research and Economic Development's website has a list of seven major areas of research for the University. CCT plays a significant role in five of those areas, Ramanujam said.

The center's research is divided into focus areas: Coast to Cosmos, which looks at the natural world through the lens of astrophysics; Cultural Computing, which is involved with the arts and humanities; Core Computational Science, focusing on software and hardware development; System Science and Engineering, involving research in computer system development and Material World, which combines many areas of scientific research.

"In some ways, CCT is quite unique in the sense that the center supports approximately 35 tenure track faculty by about 50 percent," Ramanujam said.

The faculty members come from 13 departments and seven different colleges. Unlike a majority of research centers, Ramanujam said CCT supports undergraduate, graduate and professional research throughout the school year.

The center also offers summer camps for middle and high school students, Ramanujam said, and undergraduate research supported by CCT was a part of the University's requirements for accreditation affirmation.

Ramanujam came to the University in 1990 after earning a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. in computer science from The Ohio State University. From 2011 until his selection as director of CCT, Ramanujam served as lead of the Systems Science and Engineering Focus Area.

Since its creation in 2001, CCT has attracted more than \$100 million in external funding and since 2007 has brought in more money than it received each year, according to its website.

Ramanujam said CCT houses supercomputers used by researchers across the country. The center aims to further "big data," or the collection and use of data so complex, high-powered computing is required to process it. This kind of computing and information processing can be used by all disciplines at the University.

CCT recently announced a new digital media arts and engineering master's degree housed in its facilities near the LSU lakes.

Marc Aubanel, director of the digital media arts and engineering master's program, said the program will start in January 2015 and is expecting five to seven students.

"[He's] been tackling it head on. He's got a big institution to run," Aubanel said.

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