



May 9-15, 2010

An Animated Career: Stacey Simmons Selected as Technology Leader of the Year

This feature profile on CCT Associate Director for Economic Development Stacey Simmons winning Technology Leader of the Year is a current story on [LSU Highlights](#).

Creating the largest animation festival in the United States, forming a professional consortium to attract new businesses to the state's capital, working with different state and local agencies to lure EA Sports to Baton Rouge, and helping develop a new digital media curriculum for college students might seem like a tall order for one person's day job.

But, these are among the achievements for Stacey Simmons, Ph.D., who was named Louisiana's Technology Leader of the Year at the Governor's Technology Awards on March 19.

Simmons, who is Associate Director for Economic Development at LSU's Center for Computation & Technology, or CCT, has spent her career finding innovative ways to highlight the intersections between art and technology.

A native of the New Orleans area, Simmons moved to Los Angeles to pursue her dream of working in the film industry, and held production roles with different studios. But after several years there, she decided to return to Louisiana and help establish the film industry in her home state.

After working as an adjunct professor with Tulane University, Simmons came to LSU in 2003 to develop strategic initiatives for the CCT. She wanted to find a way to make high-performance computing technology understandable and accessible to members of the Baton Rouge community. This idea became the Red Stick International Animation Festival.

Red Stick, which Simmons created along with Professor Stephen David Beck in 2005, has grown into the largest animation festival in the United States in only five years, and has become a draw for both scientists and artists who are interested in seeing the latest developments in digital media.

Through her work on the festival, Simmons realized the city could benefit from a consortium of local business and government agencies that worked specifically at

attracting digital media industries to the state. She founded the Baton Rouge Area Digital Industries Consortium (BRADIC), which encompasses LSU, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President's Office. It is the only organization of its kind in the nation, an innovation that was one of the key reasons she was nominated for the highest technology honor in the state.

The consortium, or BRADIC, promotes the state's lucrative tax credit program, talented workforce, and teamwork between education and business to animation studios, video game development companies, visual effects houses, and other digital media industries to entice them to Louisiana.

These tax incentives for digital businesses and the strong partnerships among key agencies in the area are the primary factors that convinced Electronic Arts Inc., or EA, the world's leading independent video game developer and publisher, to locate their North American Test Center in Baton Rouge, on LSU's south campus in late 2008.

Another factor in EA's decision to locate here was the Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies and Research, or AVATAR, Initiative to create a new curriculum and research opportunities in digital media. LSU created AVATAR in spring 2008, and Simmons is one of the professors working to develop this program, which will help students learn the skills they need for careers in this exciting and emerging field.

AVATAR Initiative will launch the University's first minor in digital media in the Fall 2010 semester. To promote the program, Simmons created a lecture series for the spring and fall semesters, which will bring in professionals from various areas of digital media to campus.

"As a professional working in digital media, I often get approached by college students who want jobs as video game developers, animators, artists and much more," Simmons said. "I am excited to be part of the group that created this new curriculum so we can give students a chance to learn how they can get jobs in this field. And because the digital industry in our state is growing, this program will train students for jobs they can get in this area, which will make them more likely to stay here after graduation."

Pats on the Back:

- Sumanta Acharya, professor with CCT and mechanical engineering, was selected as an LSU Distinguished Research Master of Engineering, Science and Technology. This honor, administered through LSU's Office of Research & Economic Development, has been presented annually since 1972 by the University Council on Research to acknowledge faculty who have made remarkable contributions through research and teaching. The University also awards a Distinguished Research Master of Arts, Humanities and Social Science.
- Gabrielle Allen received a supplement of \$66,120 to the project "Louisiana Research Infrastructure Improvement: Cybertools." The supplement will fund additional

students for this summer's REU at CCT.

- Robert Lipton received an award from the Dept. of Air Force titled "Multi-scale Constrained Free Energy Modeling for Damage Initiation and Propagation in High Strength Titanium Alloys." The award is in the amount of \$34,753 for one year.
- Jorge Pullin received an award from the National Science Foundation titled "US-Latin American Quantum Gravity Network Workshop." The award is in the amount of 24,200 for one year, and supports the participation of a mixture of experienced and young U.S. researchers in a US-Latin American workshop on quantum gravity co-organized by Jorge Pullin. The workshop will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 28-31, 2010.

CCT in the News:

So about that iPad.

Source: [225 Baton Rouge](#)

Please Note:

- CCT's SIGGRAPH 2010 Committee is hosting a SIGGRAPH Research Demonstrations & Talks session in the CCT Training Room (Johnston 338) on Monday, May 17, from 11:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Anyone interested in presenting research for inclusion in CCT's exhibit at SIGGRAPH 2010 is invited to participate. Please plan to spend about 15-20 minutes conducting a demonstration or giving a talk that shows what you are working on and how it relates to the conference's key topics. As this session takes place in the afternoon, the SIGGRAPH Committee will provide pizza for attendees. If you are interested in participating, please e-mail Kristen Sunde at ksunde@cct.lsu.edu by this Thursday, May 13, indicating your preferred time to present your research. This will help us schedule participants for May 17 and ensure we have enough pizza for everyone.
- Prior approval is required for Special Meal Requests. Employees who make meal purchases without prior approvals may find that they must cover the cost of any monies spent for an unapproved event out of pocket, especially now that state funds are under a spending freeze. Please contact Susie Poskonka (susie@cct.lsu.edu) prior to any special meal with visitor(s) to file the appropriate request for approval. Prior approval could take up to one week, so please plan accordingly.
- Please note that the University has frozen all LaCarte spending, unless cardholders receive written approval for a purchase from Accounts Payable or Purchasing. If you have a purchase you wish to make that you feel may warrant an exemption to the spending freeze, please contact Theresa Markey or Andrew Cox in the CCT Business Office for guidance

- This summer, CCT and the LONI Institute will host a Computational Science Workshop for Louisiana Educators on campus July 19-23 to introduce Louisiana high school teachers to computational science tools and techniques, giving them ideas for incorporating this into their lesson plans and curricula. Attendees will leave with at least one lesson plan and homework assignment that include new computational science concepts and activities. Louisiana high school teachers who participate in this workshop will receive a \$500 stipend. If you work with any high schools or know teachers who would like to participate, please ask them to visit the workshop Web site at <http://www.cct.lsu.edu/LAeducators> to register or receive more information. For questions about the workshop curriculum, please contact Bety Rodriguez at brodrig@cct.lsu.edu or 225-578-8990. For all other questions, contact Karen Jones at kjones@cct.lsu.edu or 225-578-0595.
- [Early bird Registration](#) and housing is now available for [SIGGRAPH 2010](#), the premier conference on computer graphics and interactive techniques. Register now for five days of education, exploration, and inspiration at [SIGGRAPH 2010](#) in Los Angeles, July 25-29 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. [Early registration](#) discounts are available through June 4, 2010.
- SC10 is seeking submissions for posters and ACM student posters that display cutting-edge, interesting research in high-end computing, storage, networking and analytics. Posters provide an excellent opportunity for short presentations and informal discussions with conference attendees. Posters will be prominently displayed for the duration of the conference, giving presenters a chance to showcase their latest results and innovations. One poster will be honored with a Best Poster Award. A limited number of active displays will be part of the poster session. Students who are ACM members also are encouraged to submit posters as part of the ACM Student Research Competition (SRC), with awards and special recognition at SC10 plus the chance to compete in the SRC grand finals. Submissions are due July 15, 2010. For questions, contact: posters@info.supercomputing.org, or visit the submission site, <http://submissions.supercomputing.org>.
- Applications for Student Volunteers for [SC10](#) are now being accepted. The deadline to apply is Sunday, Aug. 27. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to apply as volunteers to help with the administration of the conference. In exchange, students will receive complimentary conference registration, housing (for out-of-town volunteers) and some meals. Volunteers will be expected to be available for a total of 4-5 hours of work per day during the week of the conference, which will take place Nov. 13-19 in New Orleans. Successful applicants will be notified of their acceptance by Sept. 30. If you have any questions please e-mail student-vols@info.supercomputing.org.
- Please remember to send your news concerning grants, awards, conferences, or other pertinent information to PR Manager Kristen Sunde at ksunde@cct.lsu.edu.
- Follow CCT with social media to access photos and see news, events or updated

information. Both these pages are public; you do not need an account to view the information.

- [Facebook group](#) : LSU Center for Computation & Technology
- [Twitter](#) : LSUCCT
- [YouTube channel](#) : LSUCCT

Upcoming Grant Deadlines:

Note: There are no deadlines scheduled at this time. Please check the [CCT deadline Web site](#), since it is updated daily.