April 28, 2015

To UVM instructors in Fall 2015;

The Computer Science (CS) Department is providing a limited number of UVM CS and CS & Information Systems majors with an opportunity for an all-expenses trip to the 2015 Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Conference in Houston, TX (http://gracehopper.org/). We will be flying out the afternoon of Oct 13, 2015, returning on Oct 17, 2015, so attendees will be missing some classes during this time period.

We have asked applicants to reach out to you, since they are enrolled in a class you will be teaching during Fall 2015, to see if you are willing to excuse this absence and make accommodations for missed work during this time. Since we will be committing up to $2000 per student selected to go on this trip (much of which is non-refundable) we would like to know up front which students will not be able to make up any missed academic work due to this trip.

While you are not required to make accommodations for a trip like this, we hope that you will support and encourage these students to take advantage of this tremendous academic enrichment opportunity, which is intended to help increase retention and success of female computer scientists in the increasingly male-dominated field of CS. In 2014 only 12% of U.S. bachelor’s degrees in CS were awarded to women (down from 37% in 1985). This is not only unfortunate for the women who are missing out on fulfilling careers in CS, but it is also a big problem for the U.S. economy. Currently, CS jobs go unfilled and/or are filled by foreign workers through employment-based immigration visas; predictions are that by 2022 only 39% of U.S. computing jobs will be fillable by U.S. CS degree recipients. Funding for this trip will be provided through the BRAID initiative (Building, Recruiting, And Inclusion for Diversity; http://bit.ly/1yr4Aef).

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.
Very best regards,

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