CS GSA Events & Activities Summary (2008 - 09)

The events and activities of the CS GSA in the current academic year (from June '08 – May '09) are summarized below and have been categorized by:

1. Academic events - that promote academic excellence;
2. Social events - that encourages more interactions amongst students, faculty & staff;
3. Academic activities - that address the academic needs and problems of the students;
4. Other activities - that we have undertaken this year;
5. Proposed social events - that have been planned for the coming months; and
6. Proposed academic activities – which we have planned till Sep '09.

Academic Events:

1. Incoming Graduate Student Assistance & Orientation (09//2008)
   - Contacted all incoming students in August '08 welcoming them to the CS Dept., provided assistance to ease their transition into grad school and the CS Dept.
   - Introduced CS GSA and GSGA to all the new students during their CS Dept orientation

   - Organized a workshop to help students build their personal websites at their UC web account.
   - The idea was to ensure that every student has their own professional website.

3. "Research, Jobs & Movie" (04/11/2009)
   - The half day event was intended to help students beginning their research and to provide tips to students looking for part-time and full-time jobs.
   - Conducted several presentations on - the resources and the research tools available at UC, tips on resume and cover letter writing, and a workshop on problem solving and interview skills.
   - A “town hall / panel” session was held, comprising of senior students who talked about their experiences and answered questions related to grad student life.

4. 4th Annual CS / ECE Poster Competition (04/17/2009)
   - Organized the 4th annual poster competition which had 25 participants (17 posters), judged by a panel of 6 judges. The poster event was followed by a repeat of the panel session from the "Research, Jobs & Movie" event.

Social Events:

1. Thanksgiving Celebrations (11/25/2008)
   - Organized lunch, movie screening for all faculty, staff and students during Thanksgiving week.
   - Over 100 people turned up for the event and several faculty and staff brought Turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberries, lots of dessert, and vegetarian dishes for lunch.

2. Game Night after Exams (2008/12/12, 2009/03/13)
   - Started this quarterly event held on the Friday of the exam week to celebrate the end of the exams with a lot of board games, movie screening and pizza.

3. Stress Buster: Beginners Yoga (03/12/2009)
   - Organized a customized yoga class at the CRC before the exam week that focused on relaxing and relieving stress and was taught by a professional yoga instructor at the CRC.

4. Exam week coffee break (Exam week, Fall & Winter '08 – '09)
   - Continued the previous CS GSA’s initiative of providing coffee, tea, hot chocolate and cookies during the exam week for students staying late in college and preparing for their exams.
Academic Activities:

1. Implementation of the new CPT policy
   - Spoke to our Dept. Head, Prof. Raj Bhatnagar, regarding the new CPT policy that was approved in 2007 for the ECECS Dept but wasn’t yet implemented in the CS Dept.
   - The new CPT policy has now been implemented which allows international students pursuing internship opportunities to register for a course to fulfill their CPT requirements.

2. Reduction of course requirements for PhD students
   - The course requirements had been increased from 45 to 52 credit hours for the direct-PhD students who joined the Dept in 2007 and the students found it onerous.
   - Put forth the concerns to our Dept. Head, Prof. Raj Bhatnagar, regarding this issue and the Dept. decided to reduce the requirements back to 45 credits.

3. Updating DQE materials
   - Obtained several old Doctoral Qualifying Exam (DQE) papers and other materials for the benefit of the first-year PhD students (posted at the CS GSA website).

Other Activities:

1. Representation at the GSGA
   - Attended and actively participated in all GSGA assembly meetings and other activities.

2. “Helping Change Lives”
   - Participated in the “Helping Change Lives” competition to raise money for the Serve Beyond Cincinnati’s trip to Africa to build water systems for two villages in Cameroon.
   - Promoted and participated in the fundraiser for the same at Baba Budans (11/21/2008)

Proposed Social Events:

1. “Exam week Coffee Break”, “Stress buster: Yoga class” & “Game Night after Exams”
   - Intend to continue these events for the spring quarter as well.

2. “Photo Scavenger Hunt”
   - We have planned a photo scavenger hunt for the students towards the end of May.

Proposed Academic Activities:

1. Incoming Graduate Student Assistance & Orientation
   - Planned to contact the incoming CS Dept students in July and assist them with their needs
   - Planned to host a picnic and party welcoming new students before the beginning of the Fall quarter

2. Peer Mentoring
   - Assign volunteering senior graduate students in the Dept as a mentors to incoming graduate students

3. Google’s Code Jam
   - Encourage students to participate in Google’s Code Jam competition ’09.