Ferris’ CNS Program Goes Coastal

Computer Networks and Systems students get quirky

Students in associate professor Keith Jewett’s Network Theory and Test course are shuttling across the hallway in the fourth floor of the Swan Building, which, for the moment is the fastest way to get from New York to L.A.

“When I set the lab up, each row of student workstations represents a separate company,” says Jewett. “Then, I divide each company into ‘East Coast’ and ‘West Coast’ segments.” Based on these assignments, students move to lab rooms on opposite sides of the hallway and work building Unix/Linux and Microsoft servers that simulate networks between “East Coast” and “West Coast” locations.

An expert in the Unix operating system, as well as local and wide-area networking, Jewett carefully simulates the network environment and service demands that his Computer Networks and Systems students will encounter in the workplace.

“We stress the network and then see what we have to do to ‘un-stress’ it,” explains CNS program senior Aaron White of Detroit. Over the course of the semester, students learn what it takes to operate the networks that allow organizations to share data among work sites.

“The students brought them out on the floor, got it all unboxed and unwrapped, and figured out how to use it, all on a day that they didn’t even have class.”

“Recently, I've been looking for internships, and a lot of applications are looking for some experience,” says White. “Our equipment and simulations are so close to what we find in actual workplaces that we get real-life experience and can build our confidence — I guess that’s the best part.”

The ultra-fast devices better simulate the networking systems that students are learning to develop and manage — abilities increasingly in demand in today’s business world.

“Even if you don’t have a deadline, you're so immersed and so happy to be learning something that you'll be able to apply to your career, you just want to keep going,” explains White. “Why not learn something that you've definitely going to do later on? And you get to actually see the benefits of it right here and now — maybe even brag about how something works to the students in the other rows.”

Such enthusiasm gave rise to an all-out celebration in Jewett’s Network Theory and Test class when a donation of state-of-the-art servers arrived in Fall 2010.

“When we got the boxes, it was like Christmas,” says Jewett. “We应力 the students brought them out on the floor, got it all unboxed and unwrapped, and figured out how to use it, all on a day that they didn’t even have class.”

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“We’re talking about a difference between hours and minutes in speed,” explains Jewett.

“The large amount of debt students are graduating with is frightening. Also, as a veteran, I am so proud of Ferris. We were one of the first Michigan universities to do something with scholarships and financial aid to help veterans of the current conflicts. We have an obligation if we’ve been enriched to give back to help enrich others. We cannot improve on Mr. Ferris’ original mission, ‘To make the world better.’ One of the ways of doing that is by giving.’

To learn how you can partner with Ferris State University to create your personal legacy, contact Todd Jacobs at (231) 591-3817 or ToddJacobs@ferris.edu, or visit our website at www.ferris.edu/plannedgiving.

Who: Richard and Ruth Santer. Dr. Santer, Ferris professor emeritus of Geography, was instrumental in founding the Santer Nature Preserve on the Big Rapids campus. He advocates for official maps that recognize Michigan’s full boundaries, which include many islands.

Supports: The Dr. Richard and Ruth Santer Endowment

Why give? Richard remembers growing up in Redford, Mich., during World War II — one afternoon, in particular.

“My grandfather and I were about half-way between his home and the neighborhood shopping area by a vacant lot where weeds were growing between the sidewalk and the street. Grandpa was scything the weeds down. A woman came along and said he didn’t need to do that — it was city property. He looked at her and said, ‘You can’t expect the government and the church to make everything nice and better in the community. You have to do a little bit yourself.’ I’ve remembered that all these years.”

The need today: ‘The large amount of debt students are graduating with is frightening. Also, as a veteran, I am so proud of Ferris. We were one of the first Michigan universities to do something with scholarships and financial aid to help veterans of the current conflicts. We have an obligation if we’ve been enriched to give back to help enrich others. We cannot improve on Mr. Ferris’ original mission, ‘To make the world better.’ One of the ways of doing that is by giving.’

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