...that industry experts expect compliance and public confidence issues to cause information security to expand dramatically over the next few years. Worldwide, the number of information security professionals is expected to increase (from 1.66 million in 2007) to about 2.7 million by 2012. Experts expect most of the growth will occur in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, though the Americas will dominate in raw numbers, expanding from 685,700 professionals in 2007 to more than 1.1 million in 2012. (Sources: http://technews.acm.org/#359944 and http://campustechnology.com/articles/61252)

...that three competing teams of computer researchers are working on new types of software for use with multicore processors? These research efforts are in response to a growing...
Math Alum Enjoy's Career as Pension Actuary

We spoke recently with Kirstin Schmidt, '97 (Orwig) about her current position as a pension actuary at Watson Wyatt Worldwide (www.watsonwty.com). We were interested to learn about how Kirstin decided to major in mathematics and to hear about some of the things that she is experiencing in her current position.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: Why did you choose to attend Whitworth?

Kirstin Orwig: I knew a couple people who had attended Whitworth. I visited the campus during my senior year, and I really felt at home there. I liked the size, the reputation and nice campus were all selling points. I was also interested in the Young Life ministry. The smaller size, academic reputation and nice campus were all selling points. I was also interested in the Young Life ministry. The smaller size, academic reputation and nice campus were all selling points.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: Why did you choose math?

KQ: I thought that I might want to teach math one day, so I decided on a math major early on. At some point I decided not to go into the education field, but I kept on taking math classes. I don't know what I would do with my math major, so I decided to pursue an international business major as well. During my senior year, I went on the political science study program to Europe, which gave me some credits toward the international business major and helped me finish up a German minor.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: What led you to choose your current career?

KQ: I decided to take the plunge by taking the first couple of actuarial exams (with tutoring help from Martha Gady, one of my math professors at Whitworth). Fortunately, I managed to pass one of them, which helped me get interviews for actuarial positions. I then graduated and entered both the pension-consulting and life insurance fields and thought the consulting field fit me best. I started working in the retirement practice at Watson Wyatt Worldwide in Boston and transferred to their Seattle office about six years ago.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: What is a typical workday like for you?

KO: Most of my day is spent managing projects, checking liability calculations, and reviewing reports. Although this probably sounds like a bunch of number crunching, I do get lots of face-to-face time with my coworkers and clients.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: How do you balance life at work and away from work?

KO: I had a baby girl 21 months ago, and that has really changed my life in a good way. After a long maternity leave, I went back to work part time, which allows me to spend lots of time with my daughter. Eventually, I plan to work more full time.

Math/Cs@Whitworth: What is a typical day like for you?

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The Pacific Region of the ACM comprises Alaska, Hawaii, British Columbia, the Yukon, Montana, northern/central California and western Nevada. Because of the large geographic area of the region, the Pacific Northwest contest is held simultaneously at multiple sites: California, Washington/Oregon, Canada and Hawaii. For more information and to see how the teams fared, problem sets and 2008’s final standings, please visit www.icpc.baylor.edu/icpc.

ACADEMIC NEWS

Whitworth University Partners with Microsoft to Offer Course in Software Quality Assurance

Computer science graduates enter the workforce prepared to develop source code for the latest software applications, but most have little understanding of how to improve software quality. In fact, some students consider software quality assurance to be a lesser skill than software development. According to Cherie Ekholm, a senior test leader at Microsoft Corporation, and a 1987 Whitworth alum, the shortage of qualified candidates in her specialty is hampering hi-tech companies’ success at recruiting and hiring qualified assurance staff.

"The role of software design engineer in testing at Microsoft is not an entry level position; it’s a full career path," Ekholm says. "Testing is an integral part of the process of developing software. These days, quality assurance professionals in many tech companies must be able to code as well as the people who write our applications and operating systems; they also have to be able to represent and advocate for our customers, and they must have the curiosity to look for bugs from unexpected angles.

In a step toward preparing college graduates as full-time and intern candidates for Microsoft testing positions worldwide, Ekholm contacted the Whitworth Mathematics & Computer Science Department to collaborate on creating an undergraduate pilot course addressing the ways in which quality-assurance engineers improve software quality.

"Whitworth is a liberal arts university with a strong computer science department," Ekholm says. "I believed they would be receptive to the idea of teaching a full-semester course on quality assurance and that they had the ability to launch the course within a year or so."

The pilot course, Quality Assurance in the Computer Science Curriculum, was offered for the first time last semester. The Whitworth pilots are the first in the country to offer such a course, and some 20 students have signed up for the course this semester.

Ekholm says. "Testing is an integral part of the process of developing software. These days, quality assurance professionals in many tech companies must be able to code as well as the people who write our applications and operating systems; they also have to be able to represent and advocate for our customers, and they must have the curiosity to look for bugs from unexpected angles.

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