

Service Statement

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Service and community engagement are very important to me. Community engagement that allows me to use my abilities and talents in the instruction and to the aid of others comes second only to my teaching.

I view community engagement and service as an opportunity to be a role model for current and prospective CCU students. An example is the mentoring I do with the Academy for the Arts, Science and Technology's robotics team in Myrtle Beach. Since 2005 I have recruited bright, interested, motivated CCU students to join me.

Part of the international FIRST Robotics Competition, the robotics program is an annual six-week event beginning in January, plus two three-day weekends in the spring for the competitions. The challenge for the robotics team is to build and program a 120-pound robot using a standard kit consisting of motors, basic wheels, enough metal for a simple chassis, a computer processor, camera, a few sensors, teleoperator controls, miscellaneous samples, and a programming kit. Each year the finished robot must be capable of completing a series of tasks completely different from the tasks performed the year before. CCU students Jim Perkins, Bryan Saunders, and Anant Pradhan participated in 2007. The robot they helped build and program was highly successful. Jim Perkins is now doing robotics research at Georgia Tech while pursuing a graduate degree.

This year CCU student Ian McDougal is assisting me with mentoring the high school students involved in the program. Ian was a student at the academy in 2007 and it's rewarding to see him return as a mentor and take up the programming challenges. To program the robot, Ian is using LabVIEW, a new twist in the robotics challenge. Not only does he get to mentor high school students and provide programming assistance, but the new technology introduced this year also promises to give him a leg up on the emerging embedded systems market when he graduates from Coastal. The robot's cRIO processor from National Instruments is cutting edge technology that few college students in the world are exposed to.

Now in my fifth year of working with the robotics program, I find it to be a great learning opportunity for me as well as a great place to lend my talents. Sharing this opportunity with students has been a great pleasure for both me and the students who have participated.

I also have a track record of service within the department. I have filled in as senator, assisted with ABET documents, helped with grant proposals for our new lab, and contributed heavily during our faculty meetings as we decide on the future direction of our department.