The Advisory Board of the Department of Computer Science met on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 on campus at UCA.

Board members attending were: Jonatthen Allen (Manager, HP), Jerry Bonds (Former Director of Dillard’s Information Systems), Lee Easley (Data-Tronics), Kristi Hendricks (Acxiom), John Grey (Superintendent, Mayflower ISD), Greg Lindstrom (IT Manager, NovaSys), Rick VanNorman (Manager, BEI), and Cathy Yang (Acxiom).

Due to a scheduling conflict, the following Board members were unable to attend: George M. Gill (Manager, Snap-On), Jon Haslauer (IS Manager, Dillard Store Services), Terry Tally (Chief Technology Officer, Acxiom), and George Williams (Director of Business Development, Intellimation Technologies).

All faculty members of this department participated in the meeting. They are: B. Chen, C. Hu, S. Kockara, M. Noon, V. Paruchuri, S. Sheng, M. Smith, Y. Sun, K. Thessing, and P. Young.

Prior to the annual meeting, board members participated in a luncheon with departmental faculty and staff in celebrating the upcoming holiday season in Room 115 from 12:15 to 1:00. Dr. Steven Runge (Interim Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics) joined the lunch and welcomed Board members.

The meeting started at 1:00 pm in Room 339.

1. The department chairperson, Chenyi Hu reviewed the department mission with the Board and faculty: The Department of Computer Science is fully committed to the mission of this University. In the area of computer science, this department seeks to deliver the best education with the highest possible academic quality, to advance the knowledge, and to serve the profession and the community. The primary goal of the department is to provide students education of the highest possible quality through its Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Master of Science in Applied Computing degree programs, and through its service courses. On behalf of faculty, Chenyi Hu expressed the great appreciation to members of the Board for their advice and supports.

2. The Bylaws of the Board were presented for discussion and approval. Board members suggested that the Bylaws be modified to provide provisions for amendment. The statement “The Bylaws may be modified upon the approval of the Board and faculty” is then added. After reviewing, members of both Board and faculty unanimously passed the Bylaws.

3. The Board is now named Advisory Board, instead of its previous name Curriculum Industrial Advisory Board, of Computer Science Department at UCA. The department chairperson will be the direct contact person between the Board and the faculty.

4. Chenyi Hu reported to the Board about the recent ABET accreditation actions. After the interim report, the accreditation will be extended to 2012. Hu also updated the Board about the new
accreditation criteria of the ABET Computing Accreditation Commission. The new criteria will be applied in the next accreditation review.

5. Board members with the faculty together reviewed each of the four educational objectives of the B.S. degree program according to the ABET new criterion: The program has documented, measurable program educational objectives that are based on the needs of the program’s constituencies. These objectives seemed reasonable overall to the Board. Members of the Board strongly expressed that graduates should have the ability to learn and want to learn.

6. Board members with the faculty together reviewed each of the program outcomes of the B.S. degree program according to the ABET new criterion: The program has documented measurable outcomes that are based on the needs of the program’s constituencies. These outcomes seemed reasonable to the Board in general. Board member Jerry Bond indicated that in addition to items A and B in the section “Specifically, graduates should have: …”, there should have something about communicating effectively.

7. Board members reviewed the three draft instruments targeted to assessing each of the educational objectives and program outcomes. Board members indicated that there should be a clear privacy statement on the Graduate Exit Survey and Alumni Survey. With this assurance, students should be more comfortable in providing feedback. Board members expressed several concerns about the Employer Survey Form. Related to legal concerns, the Board suggested that we let the university’s legal team review the appropriateness of the contents. Board member Kristi Hendricks suggested dividing the form into two parts. One part would be for people involved in the hiring process to complete. The other part would be for supervisors to complete. A suggestion was also made that we use web technologies for administrating the survey. The suggestions will be implemented in finalizing these instruments.

8. Board members suggested ideas for improving students ability of communicating high-level technical knowledge with people who do not have high technical skills. For example, developing collaborative projects with people outside the department, presenting tech topics to middle and/or high school students, etc.

9. Board members and faculty extensively discussed how to attract more students, especially female students, into the CS/IT profession. Here are some ideas:
   a. Involving K-12 teachers
   b. Participating in Career Day at high schools
   c. Demonstrating that CS/IT is really cool and fun
   d. Presenting CS/IT career opportunities by female faculty member
   e. Having CS Club go to middle and high schools
   f. Summer camps
   g. Starting at junior high level (9th graders)
   h. Assigning “big brother” or “big sister” to incoming students.

The meeting adjourned around 3:00 PM. Faculty members applauded the Board members for their time and advice. After the meeting, Board members and faculty members continued their conversation in small group for about another hour.