

News Release

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Bring IT On! Drawing diversity to computing careers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- The Indiana University School of Informatics is hosting its second annual Bring IT On! workshop on the IU Bloomington campus Oct. 26-28. The purpose of the workshop is to encourage computer science and informatics students from Indiana colleges and universities to develop outreach programs for their schools, while exploring research opportunities in computing for themselves. The workshop will bring together undergraduate computer science and informatics students and their faculty advisors from seven Indiana institutions.

The purpose of the three-day gathering is for the invitees -- four from each college or campus -- to begin developing K-12 outreach programs for their schools. Just Be, an outreach program created by the Women in Computing group at Indiana University, will be used as a model. Just Be educates young people about the true nature of computing, dispels common stereotypes, introduces exciting fields of computing and gives K-12 students insight into how they can get involved in computing.

"Bring IT On! gathers together a diverse group of students who are committed to their communities and want to encourage children who might not otherwise recognize computing as an exciting and accessible field of study," said Suzanne Menzel, co-chair of the workshop and a lecturer in computer science at IUB.

During the workshop, Just Be presenters will provide guidance and share their experiences giving presentations to school groups. Informational sessions about how to create, fund, advertise, maintain and sustain a viable outreach program are planned. Time will be allotted for the participants to create slides and practice the delivery of their own presentations, which they will take back to their communities.

"By helping other universities create their own outreach programs, we are helping reach more children throughout the state. Technology fields are facing a severe shortage of workers, and we need to attract as many young people as we can to the field," said Kay Connelly, assistant professor of computer science and co-chair of Bring IT On!.

The workshop will connect Indiana college students with each other and with IUB students and faculty. Sessions devoted to current research at IUB will provide a glimpse of what lies ahead should students decide to continue their study of computing in graduate school. Tours of the campus and the computing facilities are planned, as well as social activities in the evenings to give them a feel for all Bloomington has to offer.

"The students attending the workshop are some of the best in the state. We want to encourage them to go to graduate school and pursue research careers. Our hope is that some will consider coming to IU Bloomington," Connelly said.

Participating institutions are Earlham College, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Indiana University Kokomo, Indiana University Northwest, Indiana University Southeast and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

Major funding for the workshop comes from the Midwest Crossroads Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate and Cisco Systems. Other sponsors include: IU Office of Academic Diversity and Support, IU Office for Women's Affairs, IU Office of the Provost, IU Office of the Vice Provost for Research, IU University Information and Technology Services, IU Office of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculties, Noodles & Co., IBM, Google, Microsoft and Bloomington Bagel Co.

Additional information about the workshop is available at <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/bringiton/>. Additional information about the Just Be program is available at <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/cgi-pub/wic/outreach/index.php>.

Web Version

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/6538.html>

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