



**March 14-20, 2010**

### **AVATAR Initiative Launches Digital Media Minor at LSU**

Faculty with the University's Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies and Research, or AVATAR, Initiative, are debuting a new academic program that will allow students to obtain an interdisciplinary minor in digital media, preparing them for careers in emerging fields such as animation, video games, electronic music and digital art.

The University approved the AVATAR Initiative in Spring 2008 as one of its multidisciplinary hiring initiatives, bringing together faculty, researchers and professionals to create a concentrated academic research program in digital media.

Faculty with the AVATAR Initiative have spent the past two years developing a program that would allow students to minor in digital media. The University approved this academic program in Fall 2009, and students will be able to declare the minor and take classes toward the degree in the Fall 2010 semester.

"Students regularly express to us an interest in working as a video game developer, animator, or other profession involving interactive digital media. We crafted the AVATAR minor to address the needs of these students as well as the needs of the digital media industry," said Stephen David Beck, Derryl & Helen Haymon Professor in the LSU School of Music and AVATAR Initiative lead. "The faculty who are part of AVATAR Initiative have developed an interdisciplinary curricula that we feel prepares students to work in these fields and provides them with an enriching educational experience during their time at LSU."

Students can enroll in the minor through one of two thematic tracks: an arts-oriented track through the College of Art & Design, or a technology-oriented track through the College of Engineering. Courses from computer science, electrical and computer engineering, music, art, English and mass communication are part of the curriculum, along with a new capstone course, where students from both tracks will work collaboratively on group projects.

To officially kick off the minor, AVATAR Initiative will host a series of lectures in the spring and fall semesters, bringing distinguished leaders from the field of digital media to campus, who will discuss the latest developments and help students understand the skills they need for careers in these disciplines.

The first AVATAR lecture will take place Thursday, March 25, featuring Daryl Holt, the chief operating officer of EA Sports Tiburon Studios in Orlando, Florida. Holt will discuss his own career path in the video game industry, and will advise students on what they need to learn if they want to pursue jobs as game developers or designers.

Holt's lecture will take place at 3 p.m. in the Atchafalaya Room of the LSU Student Union, with a reception following at 4 p.m. This event is open to any students, faculty or staff who wish to attend. Seating is limited, so guests are advised to arrive early.

AVATAR Initiative faculty and staff will be available at Holt's lecture to speak with interested students and provide more information about how they can enroll for the digital media minor.

**Pats on the Back:**

- Professor Thomas Sterling will give an address on behalf of the Department of Computer Science at the College of Basic Sciences Honors Convocation on Monday, March 22.

**CCT Welcomes:**

- Jian Tao, who will return to CCT March 25 to continue working with Gabrielle Allen as a postdoctoral researcher on the Cybertools project.

**CCT in the News:**

LSU launches digital media minor through AVATAR

Source: [Baton Rouge Business Report](#)

LSU starts AVATAR digital media minor

Source: [The Advocate](#)

**Lectures this Week:**

- The IT Eminent Lecture Series, co-sponsored by CCT and the LSU Department of Computer Science, presents "Computational Thinking" with Jeanette Wing of the National Science Foundation. The lecture will take place Wednesday, March 17, at 1 p.m. in Coates Hall Room 152.

**Please Note:**

- CCT announces The CCT Distinguished Graduate Dissertation Fellowship program to support outstanding graduate students at the University as they complete their final year towards a terminal degree in their field.

*Eligible students:*

- Must be working with a faculty member associated with CCT
- Minimum GPA of 3.50

- Must have already passed all of the required exams in their department
- Must have finished all required course work and be working on the final dissertation
- Must devote full time to the completion of the dissertation preparation
- Must be enrolled in dissertation credit for nine hours during Fall and Spring semesters
- Cannot have other employment! Students cannot hold another graduate fellowship or award

Students in this program will receive a \$22,000 stipend for the 2010-2011 academic year. The deadline to apply for the fellowship this year is March 25. To apply, interested students should submit a description of the work in progress, a list of their publications, presentations, honors and awards, a copy of their transcript, and a statement outlining the timetable for completing their dissertations within the year. The student also should arrange that three letters of recommendation be sent directly to the Fellowships Committee. The application packet and letters of recommendation (in pdf format) should be sent to: [jobs@cct.lsu.edu](mailto:jobs@cct.lsu.edu)

- LSU's Department of Physics & Astronomy and CCT will host an afternoon of free, family friendly activities on Saturday, March 27, at the [Highland Road Park Observatory](#), 13800 Highland Road, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. as part of [NanoDays](#), a national event of educational programs about nanoscale science and engineering coordinated through the [Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network](#). [NanoDays](#) will feature several hands-on activities for children of all ages, and two prominent nanoscience researchers will speak about their work. At 3 p.m., [Kristen Buchanan, Ph.D., of Colorado State University](#), will talk about "Nanomagnetism" and its application to hard drives. At 4 p.m. [Jayne Garno, Ph.D., of LSU](#), will present "Nano Theater," showing images of nano-objects captured in her lab. For more information, contact Juana Moreno at [Moreno@lsu.edu](mailto:Moreno@lsu.edu), or visit <http://www.cct.lsu.edu/LSUNanoday>.
- LSU CCT and the Louisiana Biomedical Research Network (LBRN), will host the 3rd Workshop on Computational Biology March 26-27, 2010 at LSU. This workshop will bring together researchers using computational approaches in the biological sciences, HPC providers and cyberinfrastructure developers. For a full schedule, please visit <http://.lbrn.lsu.edu/urls/cw2010>. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Dung Pham, [dpham3@lsu.edu](mailto:dpham3@lsu.edu).
- The next LONI HPC workshop will be hosted by UNO March 29 - 30 at UNO. For more information, visit <http://www.hpc.lsu.edu/training>. LSU's LONI HPC workshop has been rescheduled for April 26 - 28.
- This summer, CCT will host its first Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), a nine-week program that gives students an opportunity to join interdisciplinary research groups and use the advanced cyberinfrastructure available on campus to work collaboratively on computational science projects. CCT will accept eight

students for the Summer 2010 REU. Each participating student will receive a stipend of \$4,500, free housing in University dormitories, and up to \$500 in travel expenses. Interested undergraduate students from any academic discipline are welcome to apply. Applications are due March 31, 2010, and students will be notified of whether they have been accepted by April 10. For more information or to see details on how to apply, please visit: <http://reu.cct.lsu.edu>.

- LSU Day, a celebration of LSU's sesquicentennial anniversary, will take place on Saturday, April 24. The campus will host a large exhibition in the Quad and on the Parade Ground on this day to demonstrate work taking place in the different areas of campus for alumni, current or prospective students, and members of the Baton Rouge community. CCT's exhibit will take place in the visualization resources room in Middleton Library, and will feature the center's research videos and demonstrations of scientific visualization research. CCT will also provide a Best of the Fest reel from Red Stick International Animation Festival to show in Dodson Hall, which will be used to screen films from different areas of campus throughout the day. For more information about CCT's exhibit for LSU Day, please contact Kristen Sunde at [ksunde@cct.lsu.edu](mailto:ksunde@cct.lsu.edu).
- CCT, AVATAR Initiative and the Red Stick International Animation Festival are hosting LSU Get Animated! Summer Camp, June 7-11, at the Shaw Center for the Arts in downtown Baton Rouge. The camp is currently taking applications, so please pass on the word to any Baton Rouge-area high school students with whom you work. Students can visit <http://www.cct.lsu.edu/animate> for more details and to get the necessary materials to register.
- Please remember to send your news concerning grants, awards, conferences, or other pertinent information to PR Manager Kristen Sunde at [ksunde@cct.lsu.edu](mailto:ksunde@cct.lsu.edu).
- Follow CCT with social media to access photos and see news, events or updated information. Both these pages are public; you do not need a Facebook or Twitter account to view the information.

[Facebook group](#): LSU Center for Computation & Technology

[Twitter @LSUCCT](#)

#### **Upcoming Grant Deadlines:**

- [Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship Program \(IGERT\)](#)  
March 29 2010 10:15 am  
At Most \$ 3,000,000.00 available
- [Strategic Technologies for CyberInfrastructure \(STCI\)](#)  
April 21 2010 10:15 am
- [Future Internet Architectures \(FIA\)](#)

April 22 2010 10:15 am  
At Most \$ 9,000,000.00 available

- [2010 NSF MRI](#)  
April 21, 2010 5 p.m.

Note: Please see the [CCT deadline Web site](#), as many NSF deadlines are listed here.