



PUZZLE PIECES — Jim Turner of L-3 Corporation's ComConcept Division explains how the company is working with A&M-Commerce researchers to create scenarios whereby computers can interpret unknown information as "knowledge."

Partnership seeks to create curiosity in AI

Project Corvus – a groundbreaking research partnership between L-3 Communications Corporation's ComConcept Division and A&M-Commerce that seeks to create curiosity in specialized computer networks — was unveiled at the university recently.

The multidisciplinary project, which encompasses computer science, physics and psychology, was given the Latin name, Corvus, for ravens as it seeks to emulate ravens' reputation of being quick-witted information gatherers.

Researchers will seek to create scenarios whereby computers in specialized networks

will "talk" to each other and search their databases for unknown information that can be synthesized into what can be interpreted by humans as "knowledge."

Jim Turner, senior staff research engineer at ComConcept Division, says the ultimate objective of Project Corvus is "to document research into the feasibility and practicality of creating artificial curiosity in a distributed network cyberinfrastructure."

"A comparison of sorts is Google, which allows people to enter queries and which

Partnership, page 4

A&M-C #3 'Best Buy' online MBA nationwide

GetEducated.Com, America's consumer-oriented, online degree clearing house, has released the results of its nationwide survey of tuition costs at AACSB accredited, distance-learning and online MBA degree programs — with A&M-Commerce ranking third nationwide.

The survey of 130 distance learning master's revealed online students nationwide may pay as little as \$5,598 or as much as \$115,700. A&M-Commerce online MBA students pay \$10,455, while other Texan colleges average \$18,735.

According to GetEducated.com, which has been featured in *Newsweek*, *Wired*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune Magazine* and *LA Weekly*, the overall tuition and fees charged for distance learning MBAs remained fairly stable from the period of Fall 2003 to Fall 2005.

Among the 130 accredited degrees surveyed by the Web site, the average cost for a regionally-accredited MBA is \$14,486

while AACSB-accredited programs command a higher mean price of \$27,644.

"With 16 of the top 25 AACSB-accredited distance MBA programs originating from southern universities, the South is online education's prime MBA provider," says Vicky Phillips, GetEducated.com's founder. The A&M-Commerce MBA program is AACSB-accredited, a hallmark of excellence in management education.

"Our graduates are highly successful in business and industry," says Jerry Parish, associate dean at A&M-Commerce's College of Business and Technology. "They compete very well in the job market with candidates from more expensive programs.

"We have been able to balance and deliver a high-quality MBA program with reasonable costs.

"The recognition by GetEducated.com is a great accomplishment, and one we have worked hard to achieve," Parish says.

The university is also one of the few in the area to obtain the prestigious accreditation,

which is based on quality of its program and its experienced faculty.

Phillips says because consumers and employers tend to favor "backyard brands," namely colleges whose names are known to them and which tend to operate within their immediate geographic region, an exceptionally strong regional market exists for colleges who export their degrees online to local residents and residents of neighboring states.

She noted that while for-profit players continued to expand, the cost of attending for-profit colleges continued to exceed the national average.

Consumers can explore their options by downloading GetEducated.com's 2006 free guidebook to accredited online business and management degrees.

GetEducated.com was founded in 1989 and operates the Diploma Mill Police, a free online degree accreditation verification service designed to protect online degree seekers from fraud.

Extra Credit



WARM WELCOME — Chess Johnson is the administrative assistant in the chemistry department. She has been employed with the university almost 13 years and is originally from Northern California.

The A&M-Commerce employee of the month is Chess Johnson, administrative assistant to Dr. Ken Ashley, chemistry department head.

Years as university employee: “I have been with the university for almost 13 years. I started my career here in the literature and languages department before moving to the chemistry department where I have been for almost 19 months.”

What she enjoys most about her job: “The flexibility, diversity of people, paperwork that is so very different than what I did before, and all the new assignments. My boss, Dr. Ken Ashley, will be retiring in May and that doesn’t make me very happy because he has been a great employer.”

What she thinks makes her successful in her job: “I feel I am successful because I am people oriented, I like everyone, and enjoy helping students, faculty and staff.”

Where originally from: “I’m from Northern California originally. I have been here far longer than I was in my native state, so now I profess to be a Texan. I like it.”

What boss Ken Ashley has to say about her: “Since January, the load has been excessive since the chemistry department was in the midst of interviewing and hiring a new department head. This was a very time consuming task that she performed very effectively.”

Publications

Mary Ann Gaines, educational administration, “Using Professional Development to Increase Teachers’ Content Knowledge of Mathematics,” *Studies in International Relations*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 2005. This journal is published by the Institute of International Relations, College of International Relations, Nihon University, Mishima, Japan. The publication is the result of a trip Gaines made to Japan last summer as a guest lecturer at Nihon University.

John Humphreys, marketing and management, and co-author, case study, “How Low Will You Go?,” *Harvard Business Review*, April 2006.

Ed Manton, Don English and Jan Walker, business administration and MIS, and **Steve Avard**, economics/finance, “What College Freshmen Admit to Not Knowing About Personal Finance,” *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 2006.

Bill McCarron, literature and languages, “Most Lost in ‘Lost in the City,’” *Notes on Contemporary Literature*, March 2006.

Alma Mintu-Wimsatt, Kendra Ingram, Mary Anne Milward and Courtney Russ, marketing and management, “On Different Teaching Pedagogies: What Happens to Your Course Evaluations,” *Marketing Education Review*, forthcoming Fall 2006.

Jiaming Sun, sociology and criminal justice, “Spatial Equity in Facilities Providing Low-or No-Fee Screening Mammography in Chicago Neighborhoods,” *Journal of Urban Health*, March 2006.

Presentations

Casey Brown and Sherion Jackson, educational administration, and **Julie Combs**, Sam Houston State University, “From the Student’s Perspective: Pedagogical Expectations in Graduate Level Educational Leadership Courses,” Southwest Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Austin, February 2006.

Also **Jackson and Combs**, “Mentoring Instructional Leaders: Building Principals for Tomorrow’s Schools.”

Also **Brown, Combs, and Jackson**, “From the Student’s Perspective: Expectations for Class Activities in Graduate Level School Administration Coursework.”

Sandy Kimbrough, health and human performance, “In the Deep, Not Your Grandma’s Workout,” National Aquatic Conference, Austin, March 3.

Keith McFarland, university president,

and **David Roll**, co-author of *Louis Johnson and the Arming of America*, recently appeared on Book TV on C-SPAN 2. The 75-minute presentation was broadcast on Feb. 25 and will be aired again.

Jon Travis, secondary and higher education and graduate studies and research, moderator and panelist, “Developmental Lessons: Do We Know How To Make Developmental Education Work?,” 59th Annual Convention of the Texas Community College Teachers Association, Houston, Feb. 24.

Serge P. von Duvillard, health and human performance, to present “Metabolic Syndrome: The Effect of Low and Moderate Altitude on Blood Pressure and Heart Rate,” American College of Sports Medicine National Convention in Denver, Colo., June 2006.

Also “Maximal Lactate Steady State in Patients with Coronary Heart Disease in Contrast to Healthy Subjects” and “Non-Invasive Determination of Homodynamic Variables and Their Relationship to the Anaerobic Threshold.”

Philippe Seminet, literature and languages, “Sade contre Kant: Reason, Religion, and the Novel,” or “On Curbing Immoral Behavior in the Enlightenment,” Southeast Conference on Foreign Languages and Literatures, Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., March 2006.

Susan Szabo, elementary education, with others, “Examining Preservice Teachers’ Multicultural Attitudes,” Sixth Annual Educational Research Exchange, University of North Texas, Denton, February 2006.

Kudos

Beverly Cochran, biological and environmental sciences graduate student, won a competitive research scholarship at the 109th meeting of the Texas Academy of Science in late February. The title of her project was “A Test of the Tasty Chick Hypothesis in the American Barn Swallow.” She placed third among 33 proposals from students throughout Texas in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics.

Jocelyn Goranson, music, won the Frank Bowen Competition, a prestigious international competition. As the winner, Goranson will receive a \$1,000 prize and perform a concerto with the New Mexico Symphony in May. The adjunct instructor in flute began the competition with a tape submission and later competed with 10 other semifinals in auditions in Albuquerque, N.M.

Fast facts

Development Day 2006 set

Faculty/Staff Development Day 2006 is set Tuesday, April 11, in the Memorial Student Center.

Registration and refreshments will be at 8 a.m. with the welcome at 8:30.

The general session, "A Conversation about Diversity and the University's Success" led by President Keith McFarland and the leadership team, will be at 9 a.m.

Breakout sessions will follow throughout the day.

Speaking at the luncheon will be Sally Baskey, a professional speaker, humorist, and published author.

For details, contact Gloria Patterson in human resources at extension 5667.

Grad fair slated for April 7-8

A graduation fair is set on Friday and Saturday, April 7-8. The fair will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the University Bookstore.

In addition to being able to order a cap, gown and tassel, graduating students can get resume tips from the Office of Career Services, and the I.D. Center will be taking class ring, announcement, and invitation orders.

Students will also have the chance to learn about student loan consolidation, and they can join the A&M-Commerce Alumni Association.



REGENTS PROFESSOR — Wayne Linek (left) and President Keith McFarland are shown at the Spring Convocation held March 2 in the University Auditorium. Regents Professor is a designation of the Texas A&M University System honoring faculty for exemplary service to their university, the community, the State of Texas, and/or internationally.



BOOK NOW — The Second Annual Bill Martin Jr. Memorial Symposium is set for Friday, April 28, at A&M-Commerce. Martin was author of over 300 children's books and curriculum material. His gift for rhythm, rhyme, and the "sounds of language" set him apart from other authors. Organizers of the symposium are (left) Josh Thompson, Chris Green, Becky Adams, Brenda Smith, Martha Foote, Rhea Icenhower and Sheryl Zelhart. Not pictured are Mary Beth Sampson, Gilbert Naizer, and Aggie Stryker. This year's keynote speaker will be famed children's author and illustrator Jose Aruego, whose books "Whose Mouse are You?" and "Leo the Late Bloomer" are favorites. The symposium will focus on the best practices in literacy, mathematics, science and social studies education, among other topics. There will be tours of the Bill Martin Jr. Library, as well as the opportunity to tour the university's new state-of-the-art planetarium. Luncheon is included in the registration fee and certificates for six hours of CEU

Children's play takes stage

The University Playhouse is presenting its annual children's play, "The Great Cross Country Race," in April.

School groups will be attending the shows starting April 5. Two performances that will be open to the public have been scheduled for 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday, April 8, in the Performing Arts Center.

Tickets are \$3 for students, \$10 for adults, and \$8 for senior citizens. For reservations, call the Performing Arts Center at extension 5900.

The play is a classic retelling of the story of the tortoise and the hare. It pits Mr. Sloe (the tortoise) against Mr. Fleet (the hare) in an endurance race across the countryside.

Mr. Fleet is played by Lyn Henry, a Hillsboro junior. Playing Mr. Sloe is Kim Grimm, a Hooks graduate student.

Director is Prairie Hill graduate student Brandon Burns.

Honors Day tickets on sale

Honors Day tickets will be on sale through Friday, April 7.

The \$9.50 tickets can be purchased in the Honors Office, Room 142, of the Ferguson Social Sciences Building.

The Honors Day Luncheon will be at noon Friday, April 21, in the American and Texas Ballrooms.



GLOBAL CONNECTION — Two A&M-Commerce kinesiology students were selected from among 60 contenders nationwide to work as lifeguards and swim instructors on the Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan this summer. They are (seated left) Amanda Thompson and (standing) Justin Anderson. The Morris Recreation Center's Edgar Reed, assistant director to aquatics, encouraged his student workers to apply for the position. "They are set to be A&M-Commerce's recreational ambassadors in Japan," Reed says.

Athletic training accredited

The Athletic Training Education program's progress report to the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Athletic Training met the program's accreditation status and was accepted.

The next comprehensive evaluation will be in the academic year 2009-10.

Science Building dedicated April 4

On Tuesday, April 4, A&M-Commerce dedicated its first new solely academic building in 29 years. The Science Building and Planetarium represent a new era on campus that will help the university move into the 21st century.

Keynote speaker for the 10:30 a.m. dedication ceremony was Retired Air Force Col. Loren Shriver, a NASA director and former astronaut.

Also speaking were Texas A&M University System Chancellor Robert McTeer and President Keith McFarland.

The student speaker was senior biology major Brian Rodgers, who also spoke at the May 2004 groundbreaking ceremony for the building.

The event, which attracted area media from Sherman to Paris, featured building tours and brief showings in the planetarium.

Earlier, East Texas Radio partnered in a promotion with the planetarium, with guests viewing *Black Holes*. This featured film is open to the public from 7 to 8 p.m. on Fridays and



COOL TOOLS — A&M-Commerce students work in one of the modern laboratories in the new Science Building and Planetarium. The new \$28 million three-story facility was dedicated in ceremonies on April 4.

Saturdays. The last weekend in which this film will be screened is April 28-29.

Reservations are encouraged in advance by calling extension 8650. Admission is \$3 for those under 18 and A&M-Commerce students with ID, \$3.50 for university employees and senior citizens, and \$4 for all others.



SPRING CLEAN — Facilities Services completed the demolition and clean-up of the unoccupied dormitories between Craddock Hall and Magill Hall. New lights and landscaping, along with a curb cut in place of an exit, are planned.



Partnership

Continued from page 1

returns sources of information,” says Linda Morales, computer science professor at A&M-Commerce.

“Right now there is no capability by specialized networks to issue queries and gather this kind of information.”

“This is groundbreaking research,” says Turner, “so we are not sure where the project will lead us. However, if we are successful, it will have applications ranging from health to defense.”

The first step, Turner says, will be transforming the Corvus framework concept into

an actual functioning system which will implement complex functions as background in a distributed network consisting of a loosely coupled set of networked computers.

“This is the start of a fruitful relationship to push the frontier of technology and science further,” says Allan Headley, dean of Graduate Studies and Research at A&M-Commerce, commenting on the partnership between ComCept and the university.

The multidisciplinary A&M-Commerce project team includes Derek Harter, Shulan Lu, Linda Morales, Sam Saffer and Sung Chuhl Suh, who are assisted in their research by several graduate and undergraduate students.

April

- 5 — “The Great Cross Country Race,” a children’s play. School groups during the day through April 7 and April 10-11, Performing Arts Center. Public shows at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. April 8. Call extension 5900. Track and field, Texas Relays, Austin. Continues through April 7.
Registration and drop and add begins for sophomores for May Mini, Summer I and II, August Mini and Fall 2006.
Track and field, McMurray Invitational, Abilene. Percussion Ensemble Concert, Concert Hall, Music Building, 7:30 p.m.
- 7 — Final submission date for comprehensive exam report.
Final submission date for thesis and dissertation.
- 8 — Piano Festival, all day, Concert and Rehearsal Halls, Music Building.
- 10 — University Bookstore Easter Egg Give-A-Way. Continues through April 15.
- 11 — Registration and drop and add begins for freshmen for May Mini, Summer I and II, August Mini and Fall 2006.
“Cinderella A Rock Musical,” directed by John Hanners, Performing Arts Center. Continues through April 15.
- 13 — A&M-Commerce Alumni Forum
Track and field, SFA Dogwood, Nacogdoches. Continues through April 14.
- 16 — Women’s golf, LSC Tournament, Trophy Club Country Club, Trophy Club. Continues through April 18.
Men’s golf, LSC Tournament, Trophy Club Country Club, Trophy Club. Continues through April 17.
- 17 — Breakout Entertainment’s Spring Fever Week. Continues through April 22.
Track and field, LSC Heptathlon/Decathlon Championship, Stephenville. Continues through April 18.
- 21 — Honors Day Luncheon, Memorial Student Center, American and Texas Ballrooms, noon.
Track and field, LSC Championship, Stephenville. Continues through April 22.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *A&M-Commerce Today* is Wednesday, April 19. Copy deadline for the issue is Wednesday, April 12. Please send your news to maryl_hazal@tamuc-merce.edu or by fax to 5522.

A&M-Commerce, an equal opportunity university, complies with all federal requirements prohibiting discriminatory activities.