

Computer science grows byte by byte

By Sandy Johnstone
Of the Emerald

Log in:
About \$300,000 given to the computer science department by the Legislature.

The result?
A quality computer science department at the University.

While it may not be quite that easy, the money designated for high technology programs throughout the state system will certainly help.

The University received \$497,000 for 1983-84 as its share of the \$2.67 million allotted to the state system for the biennium for high technology research. The money will be split between the computer science department and the cell biology program, but no exact breakdown has been made yet.

Most of the money given to computer science will be used for new faculty. Two to

three new faculty members will be hired during the next year and will come on board by fall 1984, says Eugene Luks, chair of the computer science department.

But finding quality faculty in computer science is not easy — jobs in industry are plentiful and lucrative.

"There is no one in this department who could not increase his or her salary tomorrow by taking a job in business," says Luks. "But they prefer academia, the interaction with students. Teaching has rewards that are not monetary."

"We will look for the best we can get. We will not ignore the fact that there are talented people in industry, but they are very hard to get."

In order to attract the "best" people, the department must obtain state-of-the-art equipment. Part of the money will buy a \$70,000 Symbolics 3600 computer and two

more will be purchased with money from research grants. These three computers are the core of a strong research laboratory, says Luks.

"We need good equipment as an inducement to faculty," says Luks. "They must be able to continue their research."

Expanding the number of faculty will benefit the students most directly by reducing the student/faculty ratio and allowing professors more time for individual work with advanced students. It will also increase the number of courses the department can offer.

"You build any department in the long run for students," says Luks. "I think that is what the state had in mind."

Currently, the department concentrates on artificial intelligence, computer vision, expert systems, software engineering and theory of computation.

"Those areas of current strength we will

continue to build on," he says.

The department will also look for quality faculty in some other areas, such as computer languages, to build up the number of courses it can teach at an advanced level.

In stipulating that the money must go toward high technology programs, the Legislature was trying to create a "climate for high technology."

It is important to have a university in the state that can train people for "desirable" industry.

"It's particularly important for the state of Oregon, to have faculty in high technology," he says.

"The presence of top faculty here draws attention to the University and helps attract students," says Luks. "We want to put the department on the computer science map."

"We are well on the road," he says. "People know we exist."

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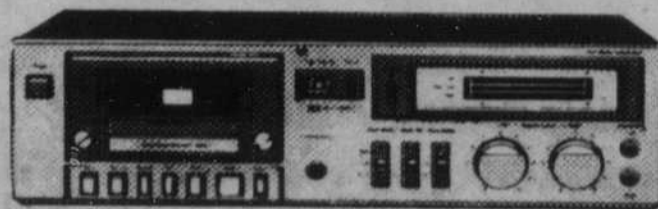


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