

Notes from the Preliminary Meeting of the CACSAIC Outreach Committee

Nov 4, 4:30pm Atlantic

Present on Skype call:

Danny Silver	danny.silver@acadiau.ca	Acadia University
Daryl Hepting	hepting@cs.uregina.ca	U of Regina
Janelle Harms	harms@cs.ualberta.ca	U of Alberta

Agenda:

- 1 Committee makeup
- 2 Meeting times and method
- 3 CS Education Week
- 4 Barriers to CS Education
- 5 NCWIT-like scholarships
- 6 CSTA in every province
- 7 Next Steps

NB: Action items are indicated by [persons name]

1. Committee makeup:

We would like to keep our committee as small as possible but inclusive of all provinces / regions. Currently, we do not see a problem as we may need some extra representation from Sask. and Alberta if we do not get reps from the other provinces.

Here are the nominations I have received – we have agreed that those with stars * will be on the committee, others (with ?) will be checked out as indicated below:

?Curt Crane	curt.crane@gmail.com	Teacher at CEC, Nova Scotia
- [Danny] will ask Ken Barker / Mike Shepherd / John Bate		
?Shakiba Jalal	shakiba@cs.usask.ca	U of Saskatchewan
- [Daryl] will speak with Shakiba		
*Fuhua (Oscar) Lin	oscarl@athabascau.ca	Athabasca University
* Mea Wang	meawang@ucalgary.ca	U of Calgary
- [Janelle] will verify with Mea		
* Kurt Eiselt	eiselt@cs.ubc.ca	U of B.C.
* Stephen Howard - Chair – UPEI		
* Debbie McAnany, Part-time Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator Faculty of Computer Science, UNB, GWE109, Tel: (506) 458-7266		

Nominees for early 2012:

*Ed Brown	brown@mun.ca	Memorial U Nfld
*Troy Vasiga	tmjvasig@cs.uwaterloo.ca	U of Waterloo

Requests for participation have been specifically asked of U of Ottawa, UWO, and U of Manitoba for their involvement. Hopefully they respond.

Details on each of the nominations have been shared via email .

2. Meeting times and method

We will try initially for Mondays 4:30pm Atlantic time.

3. CS Education Week

We will be working on areas much broader than CS Education Week.

We recognize that the US-based CS Education Week does not work so well in terms of timing in Canada and each institution will be doing things throughout the year at appropriate times for them – this is to be encouraged.

This having been said, we will encourage everyone to undertake activities throughout November and December so as to take advantage of media attention that is generated by CS Education Week.

The committee's website is at <http://cacsaic.org/>. Work is needed to bring it up to speed for 2011/12 [Danny]

4. Barriers to CS Education

We discussed the numerous barriers to CS education in the grade school system that produces so few students who are interested in developing software or know about careers in ICT/CS

- Ignorance - everyone (parents, teachers) think our children know about CS because they are more knowledgeable about USING computers
- Culture – teachers, students and parents are not predisposed to high technology jobs – many Canadians do not feel we are able to build high tech / develop software
- Schools have done a great job at using technology to teaching, but very little in the way of teaching youth how to develop technology
- Lack of skilled human resources in the school system – teachers know little about ICT/CS
- There is little or no ICT/CS curriculum in most provinces for high schools or middle schools
- Mathematics – students are opting out of math as they perceive that it is not needed for other high paying professions (health care, law, psych)
- Peer pressure to not be identified with geeky group at a critical age (this image has been created and it can be destroyed)
- Women and IT special challenges – culture, greater peer pressure to conform

5. CSTA in every province

CS Teacher Associations can go a long way toward creating an environment that overcomes the problems listed above.

- Alberta in best shape – formally have a CSTA – partially due to U of A efforts
- Ontario has a teachers association that does have ICT/CS interest at heart ??
- Other provinces do not have CSTA associations ??
- Nova Scotia just starting efforts in this regard
- Questions to be resolved - How do we start a CSTA in a province?
- Should consider asking CSTA rep to attend one of our meetings [Danny]

6. NCWIT-like scholarships

The US has a women in IT special set of scholarships see - <http://www.ncwit.org/>

Canada does not have anything like this.

Take advantage of Digital Economy funding by Feds and Provinces to create such awards.

7. Next Steps

We will have our first Skype conference call for the committee on Nov 14 at 4:30pm Atlantic. Danny will be travelling to China the week prior to this, return on Nov 13, so Daryl and Janelle may have to lead this meeting [Daryl, Janelle]

EXTRA BITS:

Below is a link to a deck of slides which Danny Silver has used portions of at various times.

<http://plato.acadiau.ca/courses/comp/dsilver/Share/Computer%20Science%20Careers%20and%20You%20WK%2014Apr11.ppt>

Useful websites:

<http://cacsai.org/>

<http://www.ncwit.org/>