

ACM 2021-2022 Student Chapter Excellence Awards Application

For Application Guidelines, see <https://www.acm.org/chapters/student-chapter-excellence-awards>

Award Category: Outstanding Chapter Activities

Chapter Name: *

Princeton University ACM Student Chapter (78184) ▼

City: *

Princeton

State/Province:

New Jersey

Country: *

United States of America ▼

Outstanding Chapter Activities: Chapter Contact Information

Please provide all required information

URL for your Chapter homepage: *

For example, <https://www.acm.org>

<https://princeton.acm.org>

Facebook:

(Not Facebook) Link to our flagship event website: <https://coscon.princeton.edu> (Computer Science Contest)

Who is submitting this application? *

Enter Submitter's name

Nalin Ranjan

Submitter's Email: *

Enter Submitter's email

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Faculty Sponsor Name: *

Kevin Wayne

Faculty Sponsor Email: *

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Outstanding Chapter Activities: Chapter Achievements

Provide brief descriptions as requested, and stay within the character limit for each

Please provide a brief description of your chapter and school (1500 character maximum) *

Our chapter is dedicated to fostering the computer science-related interests of all on Princeton University's campus. Our chapter holds industry workshops, academic talks, tutorials on programming languages/frameworks/other tools, CS contests, career advising/interview prep, and social events. Our membership of now over 500 is comprised mainly of undergraduates (~92%) and graduate students (~7%), but we have a few postgraduate students and faculty advisors too. We make it abundantly clear to prospective members that they need not have comprehensive CS experience to join, and this is clearly reflected in the diverse backgrounds of our members.

We firmly believe that the best events, resources, advice, and community for our chapter come from the very people that make up our campus. That's why our board (in consultation with members) imagines, plans, and executes each of our ideas until the end. Whenever possible, we choose to design things ourselves, rather than source them from somewhere else, allowing us to better personalize efforts to our members. For example, our Computer Science Contest (COSCON) didn't follow the typical hackathon or ICPC format; instead, we wrote problems motivated by challenges from a wide array of CS subfields, since we noticed that our members were interested in subjects beyond just development or algorithms.

Finally, we're thankful for all the support we've received from Princeton and ACM HQ, which has been indispensable in helping us reach our goals.

Outstanding Chapter Activities Essay Guidelines (4000 character maximum) *

Tell us about your chapter's most successful activity/activities – you may list a maximum of 4. Please ensure to enumerate each one and place in order from oldest to newest. Be sure to describe each activity, including: the date (add end date if it was multiple days), the type of event, how many people participated, how it was funded, and what made it a success. If you have web pages for these activities, include the URLs. Please be sure to use your chapter's official name - do not refer to your chapter as 'ACM,' 'ACM-W' or 'WICS.' Please note, links to essays will not be accepted and will disqualify your chapter.

[11/6/21] COSCON: Princeton's Student-Run CS Contest (coscon.princeton.edu) – We wanted to get students of all walks excited and thinking about a variety of topics that arise in CS and to appreciate their applications. COSCON is unlike typical programming contests and hackathons: our problems are meant to emulate genuine challenges in the subfield they are sourced from. Other highlights:

- We had 236 participants, including 21 grad students, from 17 different depts.
- We wrote original problems from discrete math (Prob. 2), algorithms/data structures (Probs. 1, 8), systems (Prob. 7), ML (Prob. 4), crypto (Prob. 6), complexity theory (Prob. 5), and quantum computing (Prob. 3)
- We spent 40+ hours fundraising over \$18,000. Most of the money went to cash prizes. Sources included companies, Princeton departments, ACM SIGs (APP and AI), and our sibling professional ACM chapter.
- The contest was 7 hours. We bought pizza and boba tea to keep participants fed so they could focus on the problems. Our entire team (8 people) also stayed as a resource to help participants brainstorm and answer questions: we didn't want COSCON to feel like a test!
- Meta and Susquehanna International Group sponsored swag: t-shirts, charging ports, stickers, etc. We also sponsored tumblers.
- Grading done through a combination of HackerRank (hackerrank.com/coscon-fall-2021), scripts we wrote (using AWS to automate grading), and manual grading (for theoretical questions).
- Our graphic designer made the logo by hand.
- See more here: <https://bit.ly/3taG1n4>

[Spring '22] Recruiting/Interview prep (princeton.acm.org/events/interview_prep/) – This was one of our members' most requested activities. We brought on 7 additional board members as peer advisors who helped craft helpful guides for the recruiting process and conduct mock interviews. We created guides on resume writing, networking, types of roles in the tech industry, and even our own interview problems (based on what board members found most useful in their own interviewing processes). So far, we've conducted around 10 mock interviews and many other informal advising sessions. We were also able to bring in a Meta engineer/interviewer on 3/16 to lead an interview prep session (attendance around 50), showing members the insider perspective of a tech interview!

[2/17/22, 12/9/21, 10/14/21, 9/30/21, 9/19/21] Socials – We placed a lot of emphasis on building community this past year. We began with an ice cream social held jointly with Princeton's Women in CS group, where we also had our peer advisors do resume reviews. We also held four "Code@Night Chills" where members can come in and work on projects, socialize, play board games, bounce ideas off of each other, and eat food together. We also had student ICPC coaches lead practices on the side. Peer advisors were also a resource at Code@Night Chills. We got a lot of feedback saying how having others working on similar projects can improve productivity and make working on projects more interesting. Funding obtained from Princeton's Alcohol Initiative, which funds programs without alcohol during high-risk alcohol hours. Average attendance: ~30 people.

[2/25/22, 11/19/21, 9/24/21] Programming Workshops (princeton.acm.org/events/code-at-night/archive/) – Programming has become an increasingly important skill. We began our series in Python, as it's easily

accessible to beginners, but has tools that even experienced programmers might not know. We created and gave a tutorial ourselves, and made a Jupyter notebook with exercises we designed ourselves. Attendees' backgrounds included CS, statistics, computational physics, and the social sciences. We then invited an alumnus of our chapter to give a talk on C++ and its importance in systems design, especially in an industrial context. Finally, we gave a talk emphasizing algorithms and programming optimizations in preparation for ICPC regional competitions. We got funding for food from our student government. Average attendance: ~35 people.

This form was created inside of Association for Computing Machinery.

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