

University of Dallas ACM Student Chapter

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Ours is a small chapter at a liberal arts university with only a small number of students taking computer science classes (for reference, the senior class has 4 CS majors and 3 CS concentrations, though other classes have more). The CS program at our school is young but growing, as is our chapter. We currently have 22 members, and they are typically computer science majors.

Website: udallas.acm.org

Essay for Outstanding Chapter Activities award:

Dear ACM representative,

Thank you for taking the time to review our student chapter's submission for the 2017 Outstanding Chapter Activities award.

It is difficult to run an ACM Student Chapter at a small liberal arts

institution like the University of Dallas. Nevertheless, over the past year, we have had remarkable success. We have made it our mission to educate students about computing through panels, workshops, student-lead talks, and hackathons. Topics for the past year have included Maven, LaTeX, Docker, Scala, JavaScript, and monitor soldering.

One activity of our club that involved real outreach to the University of Dallas community, and service to the broader community, was our participation in the University's "Trunk-or-Treat". This event occurred near Halloween of 2016 and featured campus organizations distributing candy from decorated cars parked in a campus parking lot to children from nearby neighborhoods. We were encouraged to make our car interactive to appeal to the children, and we did. Our computer science department had mentored a high school FIRST Robotics Competition team, and the team afterwards left the robot to the department. We modified this robot to toss treats to trick-or-treaters using parts that were simply laying around, with the machine shop that the Physics department kindly allowed us to use, and with some programming to make it shoot at the press of a button. Judges at the event awarded our chapter first place out of all the cars. We have another event planned for next week to make further improvements to the robot.

On the Labor Day weekend of 2016, one of our members had the idea to take the long weekend as an opportunity to build something: a web app. Thus, in an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of Pokemon Go, we created Evolve Yo'self, a simple image processing app. Users input "before" and "after" pictures, and the app generates an animation showing the "before" image evolving

into the "after" image. The project was successfully completed, and is now live at evolveyoself.com. Total attendance was about fifteen people.

At our next collaborative hackathon, we decided to solve a real-world problem for students: logging in to the WiFi. Our university uses a captive portal for authentication, and the network logs students out at least once per 24 hours. We decided to make a program to automatically log students in to the captive network, and CALvin was born. A total of ten students participated in our weekend hackathon, consuming pizza purchased on our club funding from the university, and the project was a success. It is currently in beta, and can be found at <https://udcomputerclub.github.io/calvin>.

More recently, we hosted a workshop with a guest speaker David Okun from IBM, who came to talk about JavaScript and IBM LoopBack. 22 students attended this event. Pizza was provided by IBM, and thank-you gifts for the speaker were purchased from the same funds mentioned previously. It was designed to appeal to those who might not have considered a career in programming.