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Association for Computing Machinery
Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession

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ACM PRESIDENT SEES NEED FOR POLICIES THAT ATTRACT STUDENTS TO TECHNOLOGY

Patterson Cites Continuing Global Competition At Programming Contest

New York, NY -- April 13, 2006 – David Patterson, president of ACM (the Association for Computing Machinery), the largest membership organization of computer educators, researchers, and professionals, said the results of the 2006 ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) indicate that the best computer programmers from top-ranked U.S. universities continue to struggle against stiff global competition.

The international competition took place this week at Baylor University in San Antonio, TX, with 80 teams competing in the final round. The competition pitted more than 5,600 teams representing 1,733 universities from 84 countries against each other. The five top winners included programming teams from Saratov State University (Russia); Altai State Technical University (Russia); University of Twente (The Netherlands); Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China); and Warsaw University (Poland).

The only U.S. university to finish in the top 20 was Massachusetts Institute of Technology at number 7. In addition, Princeton University clocked in at 28, followed by DePaul University at 29. Final results are available at <http://icpc.baylor.edu/icpc/>

In a statement issued today in response to the results, Patterson pointed to the urgent need to attract talented students to the Information Technology field, and to prepare them for the growing demand for IT jobs in the U.S. He cited improvements in the computer science curriculum and teacher preparation, as well as increased investment in basic research and development if the U.S. hopes to keep its technological edge in the global economy.

“On the 30th anniversary of ACM’s association with this international competition, the results show that educational policy and R&D investment are more important than ever for countries to stay competitive,” said Patterson, professor of computer science at the University of California, Berkeley, and founding director of the recently announced Reliable, Adaptive and Distributed Systems Laboratory (RAD Lab) at Berkeley.

Patterson challenged the widespread impression that IT jobs have declined in North America due to globalization and economic forces. This perception is viewed as a major factor in discouraging many students from entering the computer science field. He cited ACM’s recent study, “Globalization and Offshoring of Software,” <http://www.acm.org/globalizationreport/> which identified the critical need for policies designed to improve a country’s ability to attract, educate and retain the best Information Technology talent, and to foster innovation to remain competitive.

Patterson also noted that despite a significant increase in offshoring over the past five years, more IT jobs are available today in the U.S. than at the height of the dot com boom. In addition,

he said the growing demand for computer skills makes it imperative that the U.S. attract the best and the brightest to the computing field.

ABOUT ACM

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery <http://www.acm.org>, is an educational and scientific society uniting the world's computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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