

# Computing Research Policy Blog

Advocacy and Policy Analysis for the Computing Research Community

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## MARCH 16, 2009

### COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJORS INCREASE AT MOST SIGNIFICANT RATE SINCE DOT COM BOOM

#### Overall Enrollment Up for First Time in Six Years

Washington, March 17, 2009 – The number of undergraduate students majoring in computer science significantly increased for the first time since the dot com boom according to the Computing Research Association (CRA). As a result, overall university computer science enrollment increased for the first time in six years. CRA reported [these trends](#) (pdf) as part of the 2007-2008 annual CRA Taulbee Survey.

"The upward surge of student interest is real and bigger than anyone expected" said Peter Lee, incoming Chair of CRA. "The fact that computer science graduates usually find themselves in high-paying jobs accounts for part of the reversal. Increasingly students also are attracted to the intellectual depth and societal benefits of computing technology."

"Competitive advantage, driven by innovation, has never been more important," said Daniel A. Reed, current Chair of CRA. "Computing advances lead to new approaches to solving some of the world's biggest problems. U.S. businesses must continue integrating new computing technologies to remain globally competitive."

The Computing Research Association collected enrollment data in fall 2008. The computer science and computer engineering departments of 192 Ph.D.-granting universities participated in the survey. Specific findings include:

- Total enrollment by majors and pre-majors in computer science is up 6.2 percent per department over last year. If only majors are considered, the increase is 8.1 percent. This is the first time total enrollment increased in six years.
- The average number of new students per department majoring in computer science is up 9.5 percent over last year. Computer science departments are replenishing the freshman and sophomore ranks with larger groups than they are graduating as seniors. Computer science graduation rates should increase in two to four

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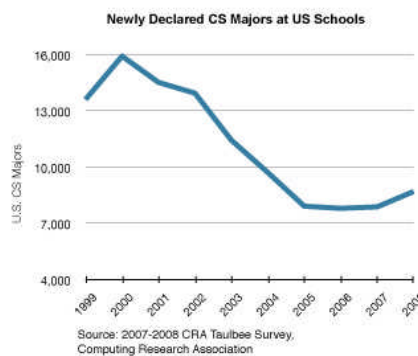
years as these new students graduate.

- Bachelor's degree graduation production in computer science was down 10 percent this year, compared to a nearly 20 percent decline last year. This is the smallest graduating computer science class in ten years.
- Total Ph.D. graduation production among responding departments grew to 1,877. This represents a 5.7 percent increase over last year.

The Taulbee Survey is the principal source of information on student enrollment, employment, graduation, and faculty salary trends in Ph.D. - granting departments of computer science and computer engineering in the United States and Canada. This year marks the 38th consecutive year of the Taulbee Survey. CRA will release the employment and faculty salary data in May 2009. Visit <http://www.cra.org/statistics/> for more information and to see previous editions of the Taulbee Survey. Obtain a copy of the [Computing Degrees and Enrollment Trends](#) (pdf) report from the 2007 -2008 CRA Taulbee Report.

According to the United States Department of Labor, computer science graduates on average earn 13 percent more than the average college graduate. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, future job prospects for computer science graduates are higher than for any other science or engineering field.

The Computing Research Association is an association of more than 200 North American academic departments of computer science, computer engineering, and related fields; laboratories and centers in industry, government, and academia engaging in basic computing research; and affiliated professional societies. For more information, visit [www.cra.org](http://www.cra.org).



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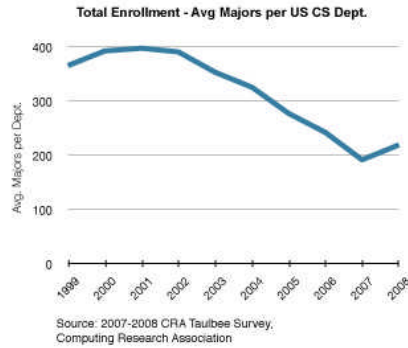
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- Turing Award Recipient Announced
- FY 09 Omnibus Details: Further Increases for Science
- Computing Researchers Applaud Congress for Strong Investments in Science, Innovation
- House Numbers for Science Prevail in Stimulus Conference
- Action Alert!: Stimulus Headed to Conference!
- Tether Era at DARPA Coming to an End
- Senate Deal Protects Much of NSF Increase in Stimulus
- Microsoft's Ballmer Tells House Dems We Need STEM Ed, Research Investments

CRA LINKS

- Computing Research News
- CRA-Bulletin
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- Computing Research in the FY05 Budget

WHAT WE'RE READING

- Computational Complexity
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Posted by PeterHarsha at March 16, 2009 11:25 PM

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