

Center of Excellence

Information Systems Engineering

and Management

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Center of Excellence (COE) is to provide an environment conducive to and facilities in support of interdisciplinary research in selected areas of information systems.

INTRODUCTION

The COE at Tennessee State University is a multidisciplinary research unit founded in 1986 as part of the state-wide Centers of Excellence program whose mission is to expand the research base of the state of Tennessee. The Center consists of researchers, support staff, and students in the areas of astronomy, advanced control systems and systems identification, applied mathematics, and management information systems. Graduate and undergraduate students are drawn from the computer science, physics, mathematics, and engineering curricula. The Center is located in the Avon Williams Building of TSU's downtown branch campus.

FUNDING SOURCES

Original funding for the COE came from the State of Tennessee Centers of Excellence Program with additional matching funds from Tennessee State University. Due to patterns of recent external funding, TSU's Center of Excellence has become a Center of research centers. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) funds research in astrophysics and control systems through the Center for Automated Space Science (CASS). The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds additional research in control systems, applied mathematics, complex fluid flows, and astrophysics through the Center for Systems Science Research (CSSR). Through the Network Resource and Training Site (NRTS) program, NASA also funds internet connectivity to all Tennessee and Kentucky Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as the development of distance-learning capabilities among all NRTS sites. Finally, NASA funds education outreach programs at TSU through the Tennessee Space Grant Consortium (TSGC).

MAJOR RESEARCH AREAS

Astronomy with Automated Telescopes - Center astronomers are developing the capabilities to make a wide variety of astronomical observations with automatic telescopes in order to conduct long-term research projects that would be too difficult or too expensive to accomplish without the benefits of automation. TSU astronomers currently operate four 10-inch to 32-inch automatic photoelectric telescopes (APTs) that make highly precise measurements of stellar brightness changes. Three additional 32-inch APTs are under construction as well as a 24-inch automatic imaging telescope (AIT) and an 81-inch automatic spectroscopic telescope (AST). All telescopes are located in the Patagonia Mountains of southern Arizona where they are maintained for TSU by Fairborn Observatory, a non-profit scientific research organization. Astronomers in the Center use the telescopes to measure brightness changes in sun-like stars, search for planets around other stars, study magnetic activity in cool stars, measure the fundamental properties of double and multiple stars, and a variety of other projects.

Advanced Control Systems - Center researchers are studying fundamental issues of controlling modern systems that are increasingly complex. Current research projects include developing new control design methods to deal with plant and controller sensitivity, robust stability, and robust performance. The areas of research include robust and fixed structure controller design, system identification, and adaptive control using artificial neural networks. The researchers are also

contributing to research in robust control and modeling of space structures, satellite control, and scheduling of autonomous telescopes. Researchers are developing techniques to model systems with uncertainties, and theories to analyze the performance and behavior of such systems. New and efficient control design methodologies that ensure stability and performance of the systems under various changing environments are under study. An algorithm to determine an optimal schedule for autonomous robotic telescopes is also under development. The algorithm aims to produce an optimal schedule that drastically improves the quality of astronomical observation as well as utilization of telescopes by fairly allocating users and observation tasks. The Center's advanced control system laboratory is equipped with several state-of-art experiment facilities including the DSPACE driven flexible structures.

Applied Mathematics - Center applied mathematicians are developing the tools to study the fundamental characteristics of large-scale complex dynamic systems. Our current research projects include investigation of dynamic reliability, controllability, estimation and stability of complex dynamic systems under both structural and environmental randomly varying perturbations. In this context, we are developing (1) stochastic approximation procedures under various modes of convergence, (2) stochastic stability via Lyapunov's techniques and comparison results, and (3) implicit and explicit numerical schemes and algorithms. Our investigation includes real world problems from multi-species communities, multiple market systems, image processing problems, dynamics of fluids and gas flows, immigration and emigration, and complex environmental systems. We work collaboratively with the Advanced Controls Group in various joint projects, especially in the development of an algorithm to determine optimal schedules for automatic telescopes operated by the Center astronomers.