

# COMPUTER INFORMATION ASSOCIATION

## PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES AND NETWORKING FOR STUDENTS WHILE SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS AND CREATING PATHWAYS TO FUTURE CAREERS

*Md Arefin and Nolan Hu*

The City Tech Computer Club, now known as Computer Information Association (CIA), has been an integral part of the College. This club provides students in the Computer Systems Technology (CST) department with many opportunities, helping them to take more active roles in their future careers both in and out of the school. The club has taken trips to places such as IBM, and it is not only looking to do more, but also to expand its influence. The club's president, Komoliddin Fazliddin, and vice presidents, Nolan Hu and Md Arefin, are constantly working to make the club an integral part of the College.

The club leaders are trying to make the club more dynamic. Their objective is to encourage collaboration, learning, and sharing, while creating and promoting inspiration. They empower and help City Tech students become more involved in various competitions, such as IBM Watson, NYU Poly Cyber Security Awareness Week (CSAW), and CUNY Hackathon.

The club members also work on projects to teach collaboration. Collaboration is the most important driver of today's advances in

open sources products. The club loves and supports open source projects. All the solutions they develop are published on GitHub under open source licenses, and members are trying to create an industrial environment to learn software development. They work as a group to develop their own website (citytechcia.com), which is also on GitHub for other students to look at. In addition, they are working on a project to create a registration and payment interface for the CUNY system as well as a CST department app. At CIA, they apply the theories that professors teach in the classroom and work on solutions for real-world problems.

Networking can be your ticket to your dream job. The club has many events with guest speakers and professionals from industry that create great networking opportunities. This semester, the club invited Pedro Peralta from GoldmanSachs, Kevin Form from NYU Poly CSAW, Olufemi Akinbode, the past vice president from The NPD Group, Omar from Etsy, and even professors from City Tech. The guests share their experiences, their knowledge, and they inspire you to be successful. The Computer Information Association is not only a club but also a pathway to careers.

One of the vice presidents of the club, Nolan Hu, joined after

working with his mentors Professor Siegel and Pedro Peralta. Professor Siegel pushed Nolan to work outside of his classes on his Honors Scholars project, *Wi-Fi Protected Setup Exploit*, and he provided him with letters of recommendation. Pedro introduced Nolan to the club, and has since motivated and encouraged him to accomplish more while trying new things that he would have never done before. Through Pedro, he learned about scholarships opportunities to different cyber security conferences. With that knowledge, he won a scholarship to attend ShmooCon, his first conference in Washington and another one to attend Blackhat USA, held in Las Vegas. This resulted in him attending many other conferences such as HOPE X, DEFCON, and CSAW.

Aside from conferences, he also went to cyber security meet ups like OWASP and NYU Poly Hack Nights. Pedro also encouraged him to compete at the NYU Poly CSAW Department of Homeland Security Quiz. November 2013 was the first time he competed, and as a result, he made it to the final round. After a year of practicing, his team, Catbug, won third place. He had also won other competitions, such as the Beamly challenge at the NBC Universal Comcast Hackathon. In addition to winning competitions, he was also a recipient of the NSF S-STEM scholarship.

Nolan stated, "I am very proud of all these achievements, but they do come with a cost. It took countless hours of time, motivation, and dedication; nevertheless it has been worth it. Many of the great opportunities that were presented to me began while I was a member of the computer club. Unfortunately, there were very few students in the club during that time, and not many of them took advantage of what there was to offer. I wanted to change all that."

In fall of 2014, Nolan became the Vice President of the City Tech CIA. During this time, he made sure to attract as many curious students as possible to help them succeed as much as he has. The CIA officers and he have attracted over a hundred inquisitive minds, which

was ten times the number from last semester. Along with recruiting new members, he made sure that there were resources that the students were able to take advantage of. In addition to inviting people from the industry to speak, he even created a small security module within the club to focus solely on computer security. He wanted to share his knowledge with other students in hopes that he will ignite a flame that will burn brighter and stronger in them. "Hopefully, one day these students will reach a point where they will be sharing their knowledge and success to other like-minded students."

The CIA officers have worked hard to make the club successful. From congregating industry speakers and coordinating significant projects,

they have tried their best to brand themselves as one of City Tech's best and most useful club. In November 2014, they strive to come home as winners from Lehman College's NSBE Hackathon. Although they didn't win, the officers tried their best. Hopefully in the near future, City Tech CIA will be able to win other hackathons to make City Tech proud.

It is our hope the City Tech's CIA has inspired countless members to do incredible things!

