

Narrative Continuing Growth

Laura M. Grabowski

February 4, 2024

Ongoing learning and growth is a fact of life in computer science. The pace of change in the field is blindingly fast, and a computer science professor must keep abreast of those changes. Not only does that practice enable us to train our students in industry-standards tools and methods, it sets an example of continuous learning for our students. In our field, you are never done learning.

The primary impetus for me to learn new skills or tools is the need to incorporate them into course content. In the current semester (Spring 2024), I'm learning a new programming tool, `p5.js`, that my CIS 405 Software Engineering students will use to implement their software project. Recent years required me to learn many new technical tools like Docker and Django for use in class. In the coming summer, I will be doing a redesign of course content in CIS 421 Artificial Intelligence that will involve changing programming languages for the course and learning many new aspects of using that language. This redesign is necessary because of the monumental changes in the field of artificial intelligence since the last time I taught this course. Even less sweeping updates to courses requires me to stay on top of changing standards in the fields, including changes to our department's foundation programming language, Java, and standard of practice with common tools such as version control. All these elements are wrapped into our courses and instruction and are crucial for our students' learning and development in the field.

I am always looking for ways to be a better teacher. I believe that learning more about assessment has already had an impact on the quality of my teaching. I have also adopted some practices related to metacognition with my students, and plan to incorporate more of those in the future. I hope to continue to find more ways to make course content tractable for students while maintaining the expectations and rigor of the courses. I will pursue those goals as an individual faculty and with the department as a whole, as we continue to strive to best serve our students.

I will continue to serve our students and university community in appropriate roles. If I retain the department chair role, I will continue to be a fierce advocate for our students, programs, and faculty. I look forward to our upcoming move out of Dunn Hall into new spaces in the Performing Arts Center. I hope that the change will bring a boost of energy and visibility as we change to a much more prominent location on campus. To be sure, there are details and challenges to come, but I think it is a positive development for the department. I will also continue to seek new opportunities for our programs, while safeguarding the workload demands placed on our faculty. Most importantly, I will continue to serve the best interests of our students in all that I do as a faculty member and as department chair.