

ACM at USI student chapter events in the Spring 2019 semester.

1. ACM stands for the Association for Computing Machinery, which is the largest international computer science society in the United States. ACM hosts the top computer science research and journals, and also is a provider for the computer science Turing Award. We established a student chapter of ACM at USI in Fall 2016. Since then ACM at USI hosts a number of events for students at USI to learn computing technologies and network with peers and industry professionals in the area. In Spring 2019, we hosted our first Annual Hackathon, which is a day long collaborative programming event that brought together USI CS students and industry professionals in the region to work on real world projects sponsored by the respective industry mentors. The industry members also mentored the students working in their respective teams throughout the day. The final outcomes were evaluated by a panel of judges formed by three CS faculty members. Part of the event was funded by the Romain College of Business. Involved industry project sponsors were from Atlas World Group, MetroNet Inc., and OFS Furniture.
2. ACM also has a women in computing chapter, and I am a facilitator for the ACM-W chapter at USI. This semester, I was able to recruit 4 female CS students to accompany me to a regional ACM-W Grace Hopper Conference held at Owensboro Community and Technical College on March 22-23, 2019. The registration and travel for the students to the conference was supported by Romain College of Business. Our CS girls were able to attend a number of technical workshops and sessions, and also network with a wide pool of CS professionals that were attending the conference from across United States. It was a very encouraging and skill building experience for our female CS students, and I hope that this will help towards increasing diversity by increasing the female enrollment in our CS program at USI.
3. Students from ACM at USI also volunteer at the Coding for Kids sessions at USI, which includes the BroCode club for teaching coding to middle school boys in the region, and Girls Who Code club for teaching coding to middle school girls in the region. The sessions initially started as a local chapter of the Girls Who Code club in Spring 2018. Girls Who Code is a national organization that works towards closing the gender gap in technology and to change the image of what a programmer looks like and does. It started as a small organization of 50 girls in New York City and now has expanded to a network of 50,000 girls across United States. Due to the popularity of the Girls Who Code program at USI, we also started offering coding sessions for middle school boys, as was a demand from the Evansville region. In Spring 2019, the curriculum was designed to teach Python to the middle school kids using an interactive environment. This past Monday, we concluded the sessions for Spring 2019, with great success stories from the middle school kids and their parents. Seeing a middle school kid talk about Python was impressive and we consider it as our major achievement.