Proposal to Revise CMSC 425 Course Prerequisites

Submitted by David Mount, Fall 2014

CMSC 425: Game Programming

CMSC 425 is provides an introduction to computer game programming. This course covers a variety of topics, including computer graphics and animation, geometric modeling, game physics, AI for games, navigation algorithms, networking for games, and aural rendering. It is taken mostly by juniors and seniors in Computer Science.

Currently, the course restrictions include a prerequisite of a minimum grade of C- in CMSC 420 (Data Structures) and a corequisite of CMSC 427 (Computer Graphics). The prerequisite/corequisite requirements involving two 400-level courses is a significant impediment to students who would like to take this course. This issue has been exacerbated by the fact that CMSC 427 is typically offered only once each year.

The proposal

We propose to remove the corequisite of CMSC 427 (but keeping the prerequisite of CMSC 420). The last time the CMSC 425 was offered, we tested this arrangement and found that worked quite well. Then enrollment was much higher, and the changes needed to accommodate students that lacked the computer-graphics background were relatively modest. (In particular, two lectures were added to cover the core graphics material, and students were provided greater latitude in developing their programming projects.)