Congratulations
Monte Handley
Winner of the AHIMA
Triumph Student Award!

By Gwyer Schuyler

Our very own Monte Handley, founding president of the HIT/CIM Student Peer Club, has just been honored with the American Health Information Management's prestigious Triumph Student Award. Anyone who has worked or studied with Monte knows how well deserved this recognition is.

AHIMA's description of the Triumph Student Award is as follows: “The Student Award recognizes and encourages the best of the fresh new talent being trained in CAHIIM accredited or AHIMA approved coding programs nationwide.”

I can attest from my personal experience working with Monte that he possesses many talents – from his academic abilities to his leadership skills to his visionary thinking. Accompanying those talents is an unwavering dedication to the field of Health Information Management. Monte's commitment to the HIM field is also exemplified in his commitment to helping others in the field. The HIT/CIM Student Peer Club is a perfect example of how Monte wanted to help other students and share his knowledge.

Thank you, Monte, for all of your hard work over this last year with the club. You are truly, as AHIMA puts it, “the best of the fresh new talent.”

Volunteering-Part One

By Kim Graff

A year ago, after taking Medical Terminology, Medical Spanish, and ICD-9 Coding at my local junior college (not an AHIMA approved program unfortunately) I thought, “Ok, I’ve got a few classes under my belt, some office work experience, and I’m smart and hard working. I should be able to find an entry level job in the medical field that will ultimately lead to a coding position.” Boy was I wrong; every job I saw required at least two years coding experience, or at the least, medical office experience. It’s the dilemma that haunts college students and recent grads, “How to get a job without experience, and how to gain experience without a job.”

Not long after transferring to SBCC I learned about AHIMA and while exploring the website came across the following blog by Kristi Stanton, “July 2011 Ask the Expert: How to get your foot in the door with HIM” (http://www.hicareers.com/Blog/BlogArticle.aspx?Id=92). In her blog, Kristi talks about the benefits of volunteering, for both networking and experience. Sounded like a reasonable suggestion to me since I know “book learning” only takes you so far. I decided I really didn’t want to be stuck giving directions and handing out magazines (I’m not candy stripper material) so I invested some time online looking at what was available at my local hospitals and found a collegiate volunteer program I thought might offer more opportunities.

The program requires a commitment of 200 hours of service, the first 100 hours where they need you (gotta show you’re reliable and responsible), and the second 100 hours in a department of your choice. Since I have retail experience I was placed in the gift shop, and you know what, I enjoyed it! I met some great people: volunteers, hospital staff, and patients and their family members. It was also a stress free way to become familiar with a hospital environment, learn about hospital service and care standards, and prove myself. I am so thankful I made the decision to volunteer; it’s helped me clarify my educational and career goals, is preparing me for that first job in my chosen field, is opening doors I never imagined, and I’ve had the privilege to make the day a bit brighter for a patient or two.

I’ve now moved on to new departments, which is another story I’ll tell you about next month…

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Credentials for Health IT Workforce
By Anthony Pineda

According to the HIT Pro Competency Exams website, www.hitproexams.org, credentials will be awarded “to all individuals that pass one or more HIT Pro exams.” The details were supposed to be available the first week of June; however, no additional information has been posted to the website. You can follow the post by clicking here.

The unofficial skinny: The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) will be recognizing (via a credential) students who have successfully completed the workforce training program and pass the respective HIT Pro exam. A credential requires a signature agreement to the AHIMA Code of Ethics and ongoing CEU maintenance. The credential will be valid through April 1, 2013. After that, the eligibility requirements “might change.” I am guessing the change will be monetary.

If the unofficial skinny becomes official, students who successfully complete the 6-month Clinician/Practitioner Consultant HitPro Program at SBCC will be able to add “HITPRO – CP” after their last name (e.g., Donald Duck, HITPRO – CP).

From the President’s Desk
By Gagandeep Bal

Honeybees have always inspired me to excel in life. They are small critters with very high levels of intelligence. In order to maintain discipline and achieve their goals, bees must follow a synchronized pattern to collect their honey. Their strength comes from teamwork and together the group can build, take action over their adversaries, and sustain life.

As President of the HCSPC, my goals include helping my fellow online students make informed decisions both aca-
Did Someone Say Discount?

By Anthony Pineda

The Microsoft Student Store has great deals on software exclusively for college students. If you are still using Microsoft Office 2003 or 2007 now is your chance to upgrade to Office University 2010. The software package costs $99.99 (download) and includes Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, One-Note, Outlook, and Publisher. There is even Office for Mac University 2011, however, this package only includes Office (Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint).

Students taking COMP101 -Intro to Computer Applications (a HIT/CIM program requirement) should take advantage of the discount while it is being offered because they are not always available. Microsoft does require student verification for the discount so make sure to use your Pipeline email address.

The CCA & CCS Credentials

By Gwyer Schuyler

I am receiving many emails and phone calls from students right now interested in our Medical Coding Specialist Certificate program. Sometimes, students are confused about how to get into the coding field and are unclear about the kinds of credentials needed. This is how I explain about our Medical Coding Specialist Certificate:

1. Our Medical Coding Specialist Certificate is designed to prepare students for the Certified Coding Associate (CCA) Credential exam. The CCA Credential is an entry-level coding credential offered through AHIMA.
2. The CCA Credential exam does not have an educational requirement other than high school graduation. But a program such as ours will thoroughly prepare students to take and pass the exam.
3. A major benefit of our Medical Coding Specialist Certificate program is that all but the last two classes also apply toward the HIT AS Degree, so if you have interest in furthering your education in the HIM field after Coding, then our Certificate program is well suited for that.
4. The CCA Credential is just the first step in terms of coding credentials. Typically, employers are looking for someone with coding experience and the Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) Credential. The CCS Credential is an advanced coding credential that demonstrates to employers a high level of coding knowledge. Our Medical Coding Specialist Certificate is not designed to prepare students for the CCS Credential exam. Recommended preparation for that exam is at least a couple of years of hands-on coding.
5. Be prepared for a challenge if your goal is to find work with the CCA Credential alone. It is a tough job market out there!

Please see Credentials on Page 5

“Information about ICD-10 is here!”
We welcome article submissions from Club members and students. Deadline is one week before the next issue (around the first week of every month). Email submissions to Alice Yan at alyan@pipeline.sbcc.edu or Tony Pineda at ajpineda@pipeline.sbcc.edu.

President’s Desk from Page 2

demically and professionally and to bring online students closer to the faculty at SBCC. In the near future, HIT/CIM and Coding students will have the opportunity to attend a webinar style online symposium.

Ever since the HCSPC was formed, our club advisor, officers, and members have strived to bring out the very best that SBCC has to offer their online students. Whether it be a Google group discussion, an article in our monthly newsletter, or a Facebook comment, our team members, like honey bees, are working diligently to keep you connected with the HIT/CIM and coding world. The HCSPC was also mentioned in the CHIA Journal (the official publication of the California Health Information Association) as a “cohesive group of students” that “do not let the online environment hold them back from networking among each other.” If you are a student CHIA member, you can access the full article written by SBCC’s Janet Robertson in the Education Focus 2012 section of the CHIA Journal Volume 64 June/July 2012.

In closing, I would like to extend an invitation to everyone who is reading this article to join me and my team to be a part of the HCSPC phenomenon.

In a webinar sponsored by the Healthcare Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS), James Brady, PhD, CISM, PMP, CPHIMS spoke about the “Critical Success Factors for Health IT Job Seekers: A Guide to the Real World.” Throughout the webinar, Brady stressed the importance for jobseekers to understand the Health IT industry and discussed the power of networking. According to Brady, we can better understand the Health IT industry by learning the big picture of Health IT; knowing the short and long term trends; understanding the different types of Health IT employers (e.g., providers/payers, consultants, vendors, government, and education); and identifying who is hiring, what opportunities are available, and what is required to gain employment. Brady also discussed the power of networking. The purpose of networking is “three-fold.” Networking gives you exposure to others, allows others exposure to you, and gives you exposure to yourself. The real value of networking is that it gives you the must have information about your future employer. Other ways of networking include involving yourself with professional affiliations (e.g., HIMSS, AHIMA, LinkedIn) and by volunteering and pursuing internships and fellowship opportunities.

Introducing LinkedIn for HCSPC

LinkedIn is usually associated as a “social” network (like Facebook or MySpace); others consider it a “business” network (not social); and others consider LinkedIn their “contact management” system. In my opinion, we, students, should view LinkedIn as a tool that can be tweaked and adjusted to meet our specific needs. Indeed, LinkedIn can certainly be used for social and

Please see Networking on Page 5
This interactive one-day seminar is designed to strengthen and reinforce competencies needed to prepare you for the RHIT or RHIA Certification Exam. It will focus on RHIT domain competencies covering content related to:

- Health Services, Organization & Delivery
- Health Care Statistical Analysis
- Quality Management (Utilization, Risk and Improvement)
- Legal Concepts
- Information Technology & Systems
- Management and Supervision Concepts

Saturday, July 14, 2012 in Duarte, CA
Saturday, July 21, 2012 in Dublin, CA
ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS

By Gagan Bal

The Santa Barbara City College HIT/CIM Student Peer Club (HCSPC) is always seeking highly motivated students who are looking to complement their educational experience and help other students in the process. If you would like to become involved in the development, management, and administration of the HCSPC, you should consider becoming a part of our Club Advisory Committee.

We need enthusiastic and committed HIT/CIM and Medical Coding students to volunteer their time to accomplish club tasks. If you are interested in joining our Advisory Committee and would like to meet and get to know your peers, please contact me at sbcc.hcspc@gmail.com. Please include a short sentence about why you would like to join our team.

DISCUSS ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE IN OUR HCSPC Google Group

Access Google Groups on your Android™ or Apple® iOS device by pointing your mobile browser to:
https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups&hl=en#!forum/sbcss-hit-cim-student-peer-club-hcspc
or send the group an email at sbccs-hit-cim-student-peer-club-hcspc@googlegroups.com.

Information about ICD-10 is here!