

CHAMPIONING THE MAINFRAME ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES



Overview: East Carolina University Adjunct Professor Dr. Cameron Seay recently joined the Modern Mainframe podcast to talk about his career, his efforts to raise the profile of the mainframe in college curricula, how to attract new students to the platform, and more.

The issue of replacing talent replacement is well known in the mainframe community. As many developers and other mainframe professionals approach retirement age organizations are facing increasing pressure to find, train, and retain new talent—the [2020 BMC Mainframe Survey](#) shows that staffing and skills are a top priority for 46% of respondents. The simple fact, though, is that most college and university information technology programs place little, if any emphasis on the platform. But some professors, seeing the career opportunities mainframe affords their students, are championing the platform and working to spread awareness among students and faculty alike.

I recently interviewed one such champion, East Carolina University Adjunct Professor Dr. Cameron Seay, for the Modern Mainframe podcast. A 2020 IBM Z Champion, Dr. Seay is vocal about the opportunities offered by the mainframe and the platform's importance to the digital economy.

The problem, he says, is not with perception of the mainframe on campus, but with its visibility. According to Dr. Seay, once students learn of the prevalence of the mainframe "The mainframe is invisible on the college campuses," he says. "The college students do not know about this technology. When they learn about it, they love it."

Dr. Seay has been involved in a number of projects to help increase exposure to the mainframe on campus. In addition to helping IBM develop an apprenticeship model and holding an online Q&A session with Compuware CEO Chris O'Malley last June, he is working with colleagues to write a mainframe textbook, which he hopes can be used to include the mainframe in more college curricula. He is planning a mainframe bootcamp at Tennessee State University this January and working to establish a standardized class which can be taught to students at different universities at the same time.

"That is my mission," he says, "to raise awareness of this among colleges."