

Computer Science awards ceremony

(UNB-PRI) Clowns, candy and magic tricks were just a few of the memorable attractions at the first awards ceremony for computer science students at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

Organized by the assistant dean of computer science, Uday Gujar, the ceremony recognized the scholastic achievement of the faculty's top students. Certificates were presented by the dean, Dana Wasson, to 57 students named to the Dean's List based on their performance during the 1990-91 academic year, 40 Canada Scholars, 10 recipients of Hewlett-Packard Calculator Awards; and winners of the Digital Equipment of Canada Ltd. Prize, two computer science prizes and the Sasi Mohah Pal Memorial Prize.

To be named to the dean's list, students must achieve a sessional grade point average of 3.7 or A minus. Canada Scholarships, valued at \$2,000 per year and renewable for up to three years, are awarded annually by the federal government to approximately 50 of the top students at UNB pursuing undergraduate studies in natural sciences, engineering and related disciplines. The Hewlett-Packard Calculator Awards are presented to the top 10 computer science students after one year of the program, while the Computer Science Prize I, the Digital Equipment

of Canada Prize and the Computer Science Prize II go respectively to the students with the highest average after the end of the first, second and third year of the program. Established in memory of a computer science graduate student, the Sasi Mohah Pal Memorial Prize is awarded to the visa student with the highest academic standing after one year of graduate studies. It was presented for the first time this year.

The hour-long ceremony was punctuated by Prof. Gujar's magic tricks; a reading of the poem, *The Burglar Under the Bed*, by Beverley Plume, co-ordinator of the faculty's co-op program; a Gilbert and Sullivan take-off by professors Jane Fritz and Joe Horton; a comic presentation by Dr. Wasson; and a spoof of a typical computer science class by six faculty members. Computer science staff dressed as clowns handed out candy and welcomed members of the university community to what is to become an annual event.

The festivities culminated with the drawing of door prizes donated by Fredericton area businesses: the Bar-B-Q Barn, Fredericton Inn, Greco Family Restaurant, Luna Pizza, NBTel, Tanning World, The Keg, Trius Taxi, and the UNB Bookstore. Prizes were also contributed by the faculty, Dr. Wasson and the computer science co-op program.

St. Thomas offers Poli-Sci Honours program

(STU-PRI) Tina Guthrie has one less thing to worry about these days. Guthrie is in her final year of St. Thomas University's bachelor of arts degree program. She has had an eye to furthering her studies at the graduate level ever since she entered St. Thomas from Carleton North Senior High School near her native Florenceville. But until last week, gaining admission to an MA program in her chosen field of political science would have been something of a long shot.

According to William Vaughn, chair of the university's political science department, only a handful of St. Thomas students have been able to go on to graduate studies in political science in recent years. The problem? St. Thomas was unable to offer an honors program in political science and just about every graduate school in the country requires an honors program for admission.

Earlier this week, Vaughn, Guthrie and their political science colleagues received the welcomed news that the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) -- the agency that's charged with the responsibility of approving new programs offered by Maritime universities -- had given St. Thomas the go-ahead to offer a new honors program in political science.

"It was wonderful news," says Guthrie. "I was thinking about doing an interdisciplinary honors in order to meet graduate school admission requirements, but the process of putting together the kind of program was pretty complicated. What I really wanted was an honors in political science and now I can do that. What a relief."

Vaughn says his department began working on a proposal for the new program more

than a year ago. "We've been interested in offering an honors program for a number of years now," says Vaughn. "But until recently, we didn't have enough full-time faculty members to offer a credible program."

Now that the department has three full-time professors in addition to several others who teach part-time, it is finally in a position to offer students the kind of intensive and demanding program they need for an honors degree.

"This means a world of difference to our students," says Vaughn, "and it's going to mean a difference to the department as well. Historically, we've been successful in attracting some excellent students into our department. Unfortunately, the closer they got to graduation and the more they thought about going on to graduate school, the more likely we were to lose them to other departments or, in some cases, other universities. The new program means we'll be able to keep our best students and thereby improve the overall quality of the department."

Vaughn says four students are already following the requirements of the new program. Those requirements include an undergraduate thesis and seminar courses designed especially for honors students. In addition to specific course requirements, honors students will need to maintain exceptionally high averages in their honors subjects. In fact, according to Vaughn, the requirements of the St. Thomas program areas tough or tougher than any in the country.

"We looked at every program in Canada in the course of preparing our submission to the MPHEC," says Vaughn, "and we're satisfied that if students can meet the perfor-

mance standards we've set out for our program, they'll have no difficulty in handling graduate work in Canada or elsewhere."

Vaughn says St. Thomas students will still have the advantage of being able to supplement their choice of courses by drawing on courses offered by the University of New Brunswick. Moreover, in approving the new program, the MPHEC has encouraged cooperation between the political science departments at the two universities.

For his part, Vaughn hopes that will mean more UNB students taking courses at St. Thomas. "Even though we have a much smaller department, we offer a number of courses that aren't available at our sister institution down the hill -- Canadian constitutional law being one of them. I'd like to see cooperation work both ways, to the advantage of students at both universities."

Fourth year arts student Tim Porter has already taken advantage of the exchange arrangement between the two schools by taking a course in Canadian public administration at UNB.

Porter is following the honors program in order to keep his options open for further studies beyond graduation in May. "My thesis is on the relationship between the New Brunswick press gallery and the provincial legislature," he says. "More generally, I'm focussing on issues in Canadian government, so the UNB course fit in nicely with the overall direction of my program."

Porter entered St. Thomas after completing a two-year diploma program in communications at the New Brunswick Community College in Woodstock. He says a lot of people are under the impression that political science students study the discipline in order to further their own political aspirations.

"Not so," he says. "I'm taking political science because I'm interested in learning more about what holds us together as a country -- about the philosophical underpinnings of our society. What has impressed me about the program at St. Thomas is the willingness on the part of faculty to inspire students to learn on their own. After all, education is largely of your own doing."

Guthrie agrees. "The seminar course I took this last term was great. I was responsible for looking at arms control agreements and updating the research that has already been done on that subject. I did a lot of work on my own, examining recent bilateral agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union and the using those agreements to test some of the theories that were proposed back in the 1960s."

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