This summer, DigiPen offered students a unique and new production opportunity. The Summer Skills Workshop gave students who are about to enter their final year at DigiPen a chance to develop their production skills to a significant degree. Following in the wake of the PRJ 350 class (Applied 3D Animation Production Problems), where students were required to produce an independent animated production in preparation for the upcoming PRJ 400 class (Team Projects), this workshop guided students through every stage of a high-level animated film production. It introduced them to the process and production requirements of a professional environment. In this workshop, students created projects from scratch and conducted them through recognized milestones of production: thumbnail storyboard, 2D & 3D animatics, blocked-out/first-stage/polish/final stage animations, and final rendered production.

Each project idea required a clear storyline that included one character, one prop, an interaction between them both, and a conclusion. Completed films were limited to a 15-second length, although that was extended somewhat with a few projects that appeared that they could benefit from some extra time. Even though the films were of such minimal length, students rapidly discovered that creating a 15-second film in just 12 weeks was much more work than they had ever anticipated. This tested the focus and resolve of each student.

Enabling all workshop participants to get through the production pipeline required the involvement of the entire full-time faculty of the Art Department and invited guest speakers and reviewers. Each student also received a one-on-one faculty mentor whose job it was to advise his or her student through the entire production process. Individual master-class lectures were positioned strategically throughout (continued on page 6)
One of DigiPen’s newest faculty members began his art education at an early age under the tutelage of his father, a professional artist. As a child, Dan Daly loved to watch him paint, and he spent many hours poring over his father’s extensive collection of art books. Growing up in this kind of environment, Dan naturally loved to draw, and his father always encouraged him to draw from life. He attended Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, majoring in English. While there, he took a few art courses and attended figure drawing sessions with his father during the summers.

After graduation, Dan decided to pursue art as a career, so he moved to Pasadena, California, worked as a bookkeeper during the day, and attended night school classes at Art Center College of Design. He kept this schedule for three years and was fortunate enough to study with some great figure drawing instructors, including Harry Carmean, Steve Huston, and Vernon Wilson. He extended his art instruction with the occasional workshop, including one taught by Burne Hogarth, the classic comic book artist. Shamus Culhane’s Animation: From Script to Screen sparked his interest in animation. Dan was especially inspired by Culhane’s insistence that animators should focus on figure drawing, particularly gesture — this was what he had been doing during his time in art school. So, he put together a portfolio of his best figure drawings and a few paintings and submitted it to Disney. Their Florida Studio chose Dan as one of seven summer interns.

Since there were no immediate jobs at Disney after his internship, Dan returned to Los Angeles. He worked as a special effects in-betweener on Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest for Kroyer Studios. Afterwards, he took a position as a character in-betweener at Don Bluth’s studio, and he worked on Thumbelina. Recruited by Disney, he returned to Florida, where he began as a character in-betweener, working his way up to Key Assistant Animator. His highlight at Disney was working on the Stitch character from Lilo & Stitch. “I enjoyed all the characters that I worked on at Disney,” Dan says, “but Stitch was the most fun and unpredictable. He is cute, yet irreverent, and his movements could be pretty wild.” He remained at the Florida studio for 12 years until its closure in March 2004.

After a short period working on portraits and plein air painting, Dan was recruited by Miracle Studios, which was, at that time, a small start-up in Richfield, Wisconsin. He spent nearly two years there as a supervising animator. Dedicated to continuing the tradition of storytelling through hand-drawn, two-dimensional art, Miracle Studios provided Dan with valuable animating and teaching experience. With the closure of Miracle Studios last year, he returned to portraiture and plein air painting until hearing about the opportunity to teach at DigiPen.

So what can the BFA students expect from Dan? “I believe that all students can learn, although they may learn in different ways,” he answered when asked about his teaching philosophy. “I intend to teach primarily by demonstration and by getting the students to work as quickly as possible. My job is to point them in a specific direction, to let them struggle through the work — hopefully making their own discoveries along the way — and then to point out where I believe they have succeeded and where they need improvement.”

Along with his wife, Dan spends his spare time chasing around their one-year old daughter Lily. He loves to read a wide range of books, including fiction, biography, travel narratives, and some philosophical works. Bitten by the travel bug, Dan loves to visit art museums around the world. “Art is like candy to me,” he admits. “I do not get museum fatigue!” Additionally, Dan enjoys sports, like running, bicycling, and basketball. In his earlier years, he played ice hockey, until his stellar skating ability led him to a leg injury. He is looking forward to sampling some of the Pacific Northwest’s outdoor activities, like camping and backpacking. Join us in welcoming this experienced artist to DigiPen!
New Campus for BFA Program

DigiPen is pleased to be opening a satellite campus, approximately two miles from our main campus, at 8273 154th Ave. NE in Redmond. Beginning this fall, this 20,000-square foot campus will be the new home for just over 200 students who are registered in the Institute's growing Bachelor of Fine Arts in Production Animation degree program. All classes for BFA students will be held at the new campus to mitigate any need for students to travel to and from the main campus. RTIS and CE students will continue to have their classes at the main campus.

Nearly all of the classrooms in the new facility have large windows and skylights, creating a bright, naturally-lit environment. With close access to amenities like the beautiful Sammamish River Trail and the Redmond Library, the art students should find the environment to be an inspiring and resourceful place to study. Be sure to come by to check out the new campus and see what the BFA students are up to!

by Raymond Yan

Accomplished Pixar Animator Visits DigiPen

On July 13, Don Crum, one of Pixar’s animators, visited DigiPen. He started the day by participating in an open review of summer production work being produced by seniors in DigiPen’s Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program. After sharing his thoughts and recommendations, Don spoke to a packed auditorium about the creative process for character animation. He discussed his approach to creating engaging character animations, including the importance of preliminary study and research. Don showed his process of drawing his initial idea on paper, shooting video footage of himself acting out scenes, and creating the final animation. It was interesting to see how he infused more life into the character than his video reference showed. He emphasized the importance of these approaches because they help animators explore the possibilities before sitting in front of a computer.

As a 10-year veteran of the animation industry, Don has done a great amount of impressive work. While studying at the Center for Creative Studies, College of Art and Design in Detroit, Don became captivated by the art of animation. After graduating and working for two years as an industrial designer in Minneapolis, Walt Disney Feature Animation hired Don to work at the Orlando, Florida, studio on the feature film Mulan. Working in traditional hand-drawn animation, he also contributed to such Disney films as Beauty and the Beast: Special Edition, Tarzan, Lilo & Stitch, and Brother Bear. In 2004, Don transitioned to computer animation after being hired by Pixar Animation Studios. At Pixar, Don has worked as an animator on Cars, the Academy Award-nominated short One-Man Band, and Ratatouille.

In this most recent film, he animated about 80 scenes, primarily ones showing the interactions between Remy and Linguini, but also others such as Remy interacting with his brother, Emile, and his human mentor, Colette. Most notably, Don contributed to the performance of Remy sitting in Linguini’s hat, pulling his hair to use him as a surrogate cook. Don was one of the initial animators cast to that sequence, which allowed him the opportunity to explore the possibilities, plausibility, and potential of this idea. According to the director, this was a delicate idea and could be difficult to convince an audience. However, if executed exceptionally well, the audience may suspend their disbelief. Audiences and critics have loved this scene, calling this “under-the-toque puppetry” ingenious and hilarious. DigiPen extends its gratitude to Don for taking the time to share his knowledge and experience, and we look forward to future visits!
Get Involved: Ways to Connect on Campus

There are many secrets to being successful at a school as challenging as DigiPen. But one secret that some may overlook is the importance of becoming involved in the school community. While the initial benefits may not be evident, involved students are overwhelmingly more successful than those who are not involved. These students develop a network of support made up of fellow students, faculty, staff, friends, and family that can provide advice and support during their time at the Institute.

An involved student has more opportunities to make contacts with alumni and students in other years and other programs. These contacts can be helpful in navigating the DigiPen curriculum, and they become especially important upon graduation as a student transitions into professional life. An involved student also develops relationships with his or her instructors. These relationships are developed through class participation, questions after class, or while reviewing tests and homework during office hours. A faculty member who knows your name becomes an ally whom you can count on when you need help in his or her class or in another course.

Students should also seek to build relationships with staff. Although they work behind the scenes, getting to know a staff member can help you with administrative issues, such as reminding you of important dates or being a resource if you have questions about your tuition account or course selection. Last but not least, students should maintain strong relationships with friends and family from home. These are the people who know you best, and, in many cases, they are your biggest supporters. Keep them in the loop by sharing your successes and your struggles.

Getting involved is not a one-time effort. A successful student must continually seek out and develop opportunities over his or her time at DigiPen. There are many opportunities for students who want to become more involved:

Join a club or the Student Association
Getting involved in a student club is a great way to meet others who share your interests. DigiPen offers a variety of clubs that bring together students from all programs and, in some instances, faculty and staff members. Check out DigiPen’s Club Day that will take place over two days in mid-September. This will help you find a club that interests you. If you have an idea for a new organization, then propose your own! Lindsay Jones in Student Services handles club related matters for DigiPen.

For those more interested in general participation in the school community, the Student Association (SA) is a good place to start. The SA is DigiPen’s student government, which provides a voice for the students and the issues that matter to them. Even if you are not elected as a class representative, you can always take part in the monthly open forums or in one of the many activities organized by the SA during orientation or the academic year.

Join a study group
Research conducted at Harvard in the early 1990s showed that science and engineering students who worked in study groups earned better grades and had better chances of graduating. Study groups can help you understand a difficult calculus or physics question. Asking someone to study with you is an easy way to start a conversation and to spark a friendship. Students who cannot find a study group can always work in the library or take advantage of tutoring hours in the Academic Support Center, where you are bound to find someone else working on the same homework.

Meet with your academic advisor
Each student is assigned an academic advisor who normally is a full-time instructor who teaches courses in the degree program of that student. Your advisor will be with you for all four years, and he or she is someone who follows your academic progress. Your advisor is someone whom you can seek out for advice with course selection, other academic issues, and your career aspirations. We recommend that you meet with your advisor once a semester, perhaps around registration, in order to keep the relationship productive and effective for your needs.

Check your DigiPen email
Your DigiPen email is the official means of communication between DigiPen and our students. Regular email announcements are made, including important academic dates and announcements that affect the whole school, specific majors, or classes. Instructors have access to class lists, and they often use these lists to communicate important information to the class. Students should also pay attention to the various bulletin boards, the SRS virtual bulletin board, this newsletter, and other means of communication to find out what is going on around the school.

Volunteer
Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for students to volunteer around campus or at industry events in the area. Admissions and Student Services are always looking for volunteers to help with prospective student shadows, orientation, and Career Day. Volunteering at these events allows a student to meet other students, staff, and faculty. It provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in helping DigiPen thrive.

Volunteer opportunities are also available at industry events outside of DigiPen. Local events like the Penny Arcade Expo and Women in Games International are always looking for help. For the more adventurous, out-of-state events like the Game Developers Conference and SIGGRAPH also provide excellent opportunities for students to get involved with people in the industry, fellow DigiPen students, and peers attending other colleges.

by The Student Services Department

New Student Orientation Is Coming
This year’s New Student Orientation will take place from Wednesday, August 29 to Friday, August 31. New students will meet their advisors and current students and become familiar with faculty from their programs and DigiPen’s computer network. Incoming students will also have the opportunity to take part in a variety of exciting activities, including Game Night, which will be host by the Student Association. These events will help incoming students meet new friends and get to know their roommates. Incoming students should also come to the Orientation Barbecue, at Marymoor Park in Redmond, for an afternoon of games, food, and fun in the sun before the start of a new semester. Any questions from parents, students, faculty, or staff should be sent to Kati Von Lehman (kvonlehman@digipen.edu) and Lindsay Jones (ljones@digipen.edu), Student Services Coordinators.

VA Program Manager
DigiPen is pleased to announce Marti Jackson as the new Program Manager of Veteran Affairs and Scholarships. Possessing a major leadership role, she will be working collaboratively with the administration. As someone directly reporting to the Financial Aid Director, Marti will lead the development and implementation of the Veteran Affairs and Scholarships Programs, which will enhance DigiPen’s ability to assist in gaining and maintaining a talented and diverse population of undergraduate and graduate students. Please congratulate Marti (mjackson@digipen.edu) on all of her accomplishments and her newfound role here at DigiPen!
Beginning with this edition of the newsletter, we will profile some of the outstanding work done by students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Production Animation degree program. We eagerly look forward to sharing this art with the larger DigiPen community. The contributions in this edition are from students who participated in the Summer Skills Workshop.

BFA Student Gallery

Forrest Söderlind
Third Year
Forrest has just completed his third year in the BFA program. His film “Rat Nip” features the exploits of a resourceful rat, who – in fine Indiana Jones tradition – succeeds in skilfully acquiring a chunk of cheese… albeit with dire consequences!

Andrion Becker
Third Year
Andrion has just completed his third year in the BFA program. His film tells the story of a curmudgeonly businessman whose reaction to one frustration too many leads to a most unfortunate outcome.

Jami Moravetz
Third Year
Jami has just completed her third year in the BFA program. Jami’s project seeks to recreate the famous “Death of Marat” painting in 3D animation by re-enacting the story of the murder depicted in the painting. To see a photo of the original painting, go to http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/art/neocl_day_marat.html.

July’s PodClass explored what it takes to work with licensed intellectual property. Host Omaha Sternberg interviewed two industry professionals, including one from Skyzone. They discussed how one can retain the creative process with established intellectual property and the pertinent legal questions. For August’s PodClass, Ms. Sternberg begins a series on casual games. In this podcast, she examines what it takes to develop casual games.

Listeners can subscribe to the podcast via iTunes or can go to DigiPen’s website. If you have a topic you would like to hear about on the podcast, please email your suggestions to podclass@digipen.edu.

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Summer Skills Workshop continued...

(continued from page 1)

The summer period so that students could benefit from experts in the particular areas of production they were involved with at the time. In addition to adjunct faculty, this list included outside professionals who visited the school to lecture on specific subjects and to offer individual advice individual students. The most anticipated speaker amongst these visiting guests was Pixar animator Don Crum, who visited the school on two separate occasions. During his first visit, he presented an overview of the Pixar production line. In his second and most recent visit, Don specifically discussed and demonstrated his work and production approach in his last animated feature, Ratatouille.

The entire workshop experience proved invaluable for each of the participating students. It quickly became clear that all had made significant advancements on their skills and production capabilities as a result of their immersion in the opportunity. DigiPen anticipates that this unique experience will now form the foundation of the forthcoming junior PRJ 300 and PRJ 350 independent animated production classes.

by Tony White

President’s Scholarship Winner 2007

For the past five years, the President’s Scholarship has been awarded annually to a select individual graduating from one of the DigiPen Technology Academies around the United States. Throughout their high school careers, these recipients have demonstrated the competence, clear thinking, and ability to be highly successful at DigiPen. Winners of this scholarship receive a full ride in the degree program of their choice at the Institute. To keep the scholarship, however, they must maintain a 3.5 grade point average during their years at DigiPen.

The 2007 recipient of the President’s Scholarship is Reggie Meisler of Monroe, Washington. This year marks the first time that this scholarship has been awarded to a student outside the original two Technology Academies founded in 2001. The Sky Valley Education Center in Monroe has been teaching the DigiPen outreach curriculum for the last two years. The leadership of David Berg and personal perseverance of Reggie made for a winning team.

Reggie's life-long ambition to program video games brought him into DigiPen's high school program with many programming skills already in hand. He has studied hard for two years and has applied himself more diligently than his peers. In addition to the DigiPen program, Reggie has been participating in Running Start and has been studying on his own. In the upcoming fall semester, Reggie will be entering the Real-Time Interactive Simulation degree program.

To win this competitive award, Reggie beat nine other graduating students from various Technology Academies. Each competitor was given a rough GDD in early February and then allowed two months to create his or her own version of the game from the ground up using ProjectFUN Editor. Reggie's project culminated in his entry titled Final Revelation. This fully finished RPG is reminiscent of Zelda and early Final Fantasy titles. With a compelling story and a phenomenal soundtrack he composed and performed himself, Reggie's game project shows great promise for the work he will accomplish at the Institute.

I hope you will join us in welcoming Reggie to the DigiPen campus. Although his workload to maintain a 3.5 is daunting, his future looks bright!

by Martin Culbert