Students Gain Scholarship Success

DigiPen’s talented student body has been enriched this year by a number of scholarship winners. In an atmosphere where passion, dedication, and excellence are fostered, several students’ achievements stand out as truly exceptional. DigiPen congratulates Art and Animation Division students Mark Barrett and Ben Freedman, who were awarded Robert B. McMillen Foundation Scholarships in April 2005. These prestigious scholarships for full tuition remittance were awarded to Mark, Ben, and eight other students from a candidate pool of 126. Academic performance, community involvement, and portfolio quality were key criteria in the evaluation process. Great job guys! For more information about the scholarship and to read more about this year’s winners, please go to http://www.mcmillenfoundation.org.

Kudos to DigiPen’s Washington Assessment of Student Learning [WASL] Scholarship winners: Nathan McCoy, Jon Quimby, and Todd Williams in the RTIS program, and Marc Thompson in the BFA program. This is the first year WASL Scholarships have been offered, and DigiPen is proud of our impressive roster of winners. The WASL Scholarship provides a 50% tuition waiver for the entire four years of undergraduate education. Washington State high school students who have achieved the highest level of scores in math and science on the WASL exam are eligible for the scholarship. Claude Comair, president and founder of the DigiPen Institute Of Technology said, “By offering the WASL scholarship, DigiPen makes the programs more accessible to any qualified student and helps lighten the financial burden after graduation.”
Michael Aristidou
Math Department

DigiPen’s Math Department welcomes new faculty member, Professor Michael Aristidou. Michael hails from Athens, Greece and is a citizen of Cyprus. He received his Bachelor of Mathematics from Aristotle University (Greece). After completing his undergraduate studies, Michael traveled to Louisiana State University to pursue graduate work in mathematics. He received his M.S. in Mathematics (2001) and his M.A. in Philosophy from Louisiana State University (2004), the latter degree for his thesis, “Irrationality and Human Reasoning.” Michael continued his studies at Louisiana State University to complete his Ph.D. in Mathematics. His research focused on Jordan algebras, Lie groups, and Lie algebras in relation to special functions and was awarded his doctorate in August 2005. Several papers based on his research are currently in press with academic journals. Michael is a seasoned instructor, and has taught a variety of math courses on the college level for the last five years. Currently, he teaches multivariable calculus and discrete mathematics at DigiPen. Michael has a special interest in fuzzy logics and their applications to game theory and the psychology and philosophy of reasoning. But Michael is equally interested in the philosophy and history of mathematics, and is fascinated by the relationship between mathematics, literature, and art. His interdisciplinary focus makes him a valued addition to the top-notch DigiPen faculty.

Visit the DigiPen Resource Center

DigiPen’s Learning Resource Center is a library and active work space designed to meet the needs of students and faculty at DigiPen. Hundreds of texts in all course subject areas are available for browsing every weekday and may be checked out for three weeks. Course textbooks are available at the front desk and reserve materials may be checked out for 2 hour periods. Students are invited to come in and peruse the collection of books, current publications, and new acquisitions Monday-Thursday from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM, and on Fridays from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The Center provides a quiet environment for students and faculty to study individually or meet with fellow classmates and colleagues. Experienced librarian Marci Meyers encourages students and faculty to consult with her about research questions and library acquisitions. Marci is proud to announce many recent additions to the collection, including materials on: 3D game engine design, advanced digital systems, the art of game worlds, advanced game development and programmable graphics hardware, as well as a number of technical and general audience magazines.

Game Developers Boot Camp

DigiPen’s Continuing Education and Professional Development Department is looking for a few good men and women to attend Game Producers Boot Camp. This intensive seminar addresses the nitty-gritty details every producer needs to know to be competitive in today’s gaming industry battlefield. Boot Camp features presenter Mark Long, CEO of Zombie Studies, designer and producer of over 23 titles, including America’s Army and Rainbow 6: Covert Ops, and a Major (retired) in the US Army Reserve. Moderator Christopher Erhardt, veteran producer and designer on over 20 titles, currently serves as Associate Dean of DigiPen’s Professional Development Department and is a Professor of Game Software Design and Production. DigiPen’s main campus hosts Game Producers Boot Camp November 17th and 18th (6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.), and November 19th (11:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.). Space is limited and registration closes on November 11th. At only $995 per attendee, make sure to reserve your spot today for this market-savvy look at production from seasoned industry professionals who will help you be all you can be.

Slamdance Scholarship

The Slamdance Guerrilla Gamemaker Competition recently announced the establishment of a $15,000 tuition-waiver scholarship for DigiPen’s Masters of Science in Computer Science program. All members of the winning team in the “Physics Award” category of this year’s competition are eligible for the prize upon their acceptance to DigiPen. The Slamdance Guerilla Gamemaker Competition recognizes and rewards the innovative and exciting work being done by independent game designers, programmers, and artists. “With this scholarship, we hope to provide talented and aspiring game designers with an opportunity to take advantage of the exceptional instruction offered by DigiPen,” said Peter Baxter, President/Co-Founder of Slamdance. Since 1995, the Slamdance Film Festival has premiered independent films by first-time directors, many of whom have later had Hollywood box office successes. Now Slamdance has teamed up with DigiPen to do the same for gaming by jumpstarting the creative talents who will imagine and create the future of video games.
DigiPen’s counselor, Dr. Janice Lovelace, will be available to students on a drop-in or appointment basis for short-term counseling during the academic year. Dr. Lovelace offers confidential advice and help to students dealing with stress, anxiety, and other questions surrounding academic and social issues. Students requiring more than 2 or 3 visits will be referred to outside agencies.

Dr. Lovelace is available on a drop-in basis on Tuesdays from 12:00-3:00 PM. To access her office at these times, please dial extension 4495 from any telephone on campus. If you are unable to meet with her at this time, you are encouraged to set up an appointment by e-mail at: counselor@digipen.edu. Your privacy is assured.

New Faculty Faces in Art Department

DigiPen’s Arts and Animation Division is pleased to announce the appointment of three new full-time faculty members: Dr. Chuck Wood, Geraldine Kovats, and Tony White.

Professor Charles “Chuck” Wood joins the Faculty as an Anatomy and Figure Drawing Instructor. Dr. Wood’s educational background includes bachelor’s degrees in Biology and Medical Illustration, a master’s degree in Medical Illustration, and a Ph.D. in Physical Anthropology. His doctoral dissertation studied the comparative anatomy and the biomechanics of locomotion between primates. Since 1966, he has been the President and Creative Director of Biomedical Illustrations Incorporated, where he has worked in all aspects of scientific and medical illustration, including animation. Doctor Wood was the founder of the University of Washington’s Professional Certificate program in Scientific Illustration and has directed the program since its inception in 1996.

Professor Kovats joins the faculty as a Traditional and Digital Painting instructor. She began her career as a lead character animator for Storm Front Studios. From there, Geraldine went to work for Disney Feature Animation and worked as an Assistant or Journeyman Background Artist on five films: Mulan, John Henry, Tarzan, Lilo and Stitch, and Brother Bear. Most recently, she has been working as a freelance portrait painter. Professor White joins the faculty as a Traditional Animation instructor and 2D Animation Projects coordinator. Originally from London, Tony is one of the leading figures in contemporary 2D Animation. He apprenticed with many industry legends including Ken Harris, Art Babbit and Richard Williams. His 32-year career includes 20 years at the helm of Animus Productions, where he won numerous awards, including seven CLIO awards for advertising animation excellence and a British Academy Award for his short film, Hokasai—An Animated Sketchbook. He is also the author of one of the seminal textbooks in animation: The Animator’s Workbook. This book has been in print for over twenty years and sold over 80,000 copies worldwide. His long awaited follow up textbook for more advanced animators is scheduled for publication in 2006.

Ashwant Singh
RTIS - Sophomore

Ash Singh, a sophomore in the RTIS program, chose DigiPen after studying at Bryn Mawr College. Originally from the Fiji Islands, she grew up in California, where she first became interested in programming and game design. Since 2001, Ash has been a game tester at Nintendo of America and Microsoft. Ash’s first-person account (below) is a great introduction to the professional preparation students receive at DigiPen.

“One of the very first things my Game Software and Design professor said about the DigiPen Institute of Technology was that it is a boot camp for programmers. The following semester and a half proved this to be true. I had thought that my previous experience at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania had been difficult, but compared to the curriculum of DigiPen, Bryn Mawr classes were a cakewalk. Now, don’t get me wrong: a difficult course does not mean that the school is unlikable. On the contrary, the challenge of DigiPen prepares us for success in the deadline-driven industry of video games. DigiPen shoves the real-world of time limits—with too much to do and with too little time to do it in—and teamwork—with all its good and bad attributes—into our faces and says, “Find a way to deal with it.” In the end, it all comes down to efficient time-management techniques and effective use of resources (which could be a fellow classmate or a programming website). The two lessons of time-management and resource allocation, in my opinion, are the most important ones we learn at DigiPen. Everything else, from writing code to draw a line on the screen, to finishing the manual for a completed game, depends on our skills in scheduling tasks properly and our ability to utilize resources. How else would you be able to complete two separate programming assignments, a physics assignment, a calculus assignment, and still be an active member of a game production team all within one week?”

Financial Aid: Not Too Late To Apply

It’s not too late to apply for Financial Aid. Please stop by the Financial Aid Office to pick up an application packet and we’ll be happy to go over the details with you. Come check out the scholarship board in the Financial Aid Office, too. Over $122 billion in scholarship money is available for the 2005-2006 year. For more information, contact Kim King or Marti Jackson in Financial Aid.
November Game Project: RESONATION

RTIS seniors Todd Eckert, Doug Heimer, Jason Hoffman, and Chuck Skoda designed this month’s featured student production, “Resonation.” Art assets for the game are created by Jeremy Ernst, Mike Monroe, and Terry Lo from the AAA degree program. “Resonation” offers a fast-paced, first-person shooter set in a sci-fi Egyptian-style temple. The game’s key innovation requires players to use sound to interact with the environment. Players use harmonic tones to solve puzzles, defeat enemies, and overcome obstacles. Sonic frequencies are mapped in an array of colors and are reflected from a variety of surfaces in the environment. The designers plan to offer Internet play and are creating a dedicated server that maintains a list of active hosts. This will allow “Resonation” to support Internet-based servers behind firewalls without the need for port-forwarding. Asked about the scope of his team’s plan, Doug Heimer responds, “Though our project is ambitious, we believe that if executed correctly, it will prove to be an innovative experience previously unheard of.”

DigiPen Students Present at Pacific Northwest Numerical Analysis Seminar

Three DigiPen students, juniors Josh Beeler, Habib Loew, and David Siems, presented their original application of numerical analysis in video game programming at last month’s Pacific Northwest Numerical Analysis Seminar held at Western Washington University. Their presentation described the numerical stability challenges they faced during the modeling of mass-spring dynamics for their game, “Ivar’s Adieu.” The paper was enthusiastically received by the seminar’s participants, which included mathematicians from the University of Washington, the University of British Columbia, Boeing, and other academic and industry experts. The presentation served as a springboard for a lively discussion concerning the teaching of numerical analysis, and the role of games in demonstrating its practical application.

Graduation Registration

Students expecting to graduate at the end of the Spring 2006 semester should apply for graduation via SRS no later than December 1st, 2005. Students planning on graduating at the end of the current semester who have not applied for graduation should do so as soon as possible. Graduating students are advised to request a degree audit with Student Services or their academic adviser before the start of next semester to ensure that they are taking the right courses and are on-track to graduate.

The graduation ceremony for the class of 2006 (those graduating in December 2005, April 2006 and July 2006) will be held on Sunday April 30th, 2006 at 1:00 PM and will last approximately 90 minutes. The ceremony will take place at an Eastside location soon to be finalized. Each graduate receives 3 invitations. Students requiring more are asked to obtain extra invitations from fellow graduates who are not using all of theirs. In past years, extra invitations have been made available about a month prior to the ceremony as the graduation list is finalized.