Memo from the Chair

Ed Hale

Today and Tomorrow

MSM/UMR’s first major fund-raising campaign was announced last fall at homecoming. This Full Circle Campaign has an overall goal of raising $60 million for the campus by mid-year 2001. Chancellor (and physicist) John T. Park has noted that “The Full Circle Campaign will go a long way towards keeping UMR one of the nation’s premier universities and will ensure that our students have the tools they need to succeed in the 21st century.”

The campaign’s theme focuses on “completing the full circle” with today’s donors — the students of the past — being asked to help advance today’s and tomorrow’s students. The Physics Department’s part of the campaign is off to a good start, as mentioned in several featured articles in this newsletter. I hope you are willing to help us as much as you can. One way is to increase your giving to the physics phonathon which is coming up in mid-March.

This is a great academic year for a student to be getting a degree. The job market is as good as I have seen it in my thirty years as a professional. Sometimes in the past, a student had to work hard to get an interview, much less a job offer. (I always tell them that finding a job might be one of the toughest jobs of their life.) Recently, however, our students have easily arranged for multiple interviews and have been getting multiple offers. If they have taken a course in C++, as we strongly encourage them to do, they are in great demand. There is a solid need for good students who are not totally computer programmers, nor accomplished theoreticians, but are pretty good at using computers to analyze and interpret data of various types. Of course, our students are also being hired for other, more “classical” jobs as well.

We continue to attract outstanding undergraduate students. Last semester, of the 15 physics freshmen, 7 got straight A’s and three others got only a single B. Two were women, one of whom is on the Lady Miner basketball team. Another freshman is on the track team. One freshman earned a perfect (1600) SAT score. At December’s graduation, one of the two marshals for the College of Arts and Sciences (who are selected based on highest rank in the college) was a physics major. Our students have the highest average grade point of majors in any large department at UMR. If you can find the time, we encourage you to come back and look over your department and interact with our students.

Physics Department Awards ‘97-98 Scholarships

The following scholarships have been endowed through the generous gifts of the friends and family of the UMR Physics Department. Please contact the Physics Department if you would like to add to the endowment fund of these scholarships or would like to establish a new one.

Recipients of the Harold Q Fuller Scholarship/Loan were Christopher Maloney of Newburgh, IN, Ryan Feeler of Rolla, MO, and Jessica Allison of Hannibal, MO. The $1,000 scholarship/loan was endowed by the late Dr. Fuller, chair of the physics department from 1948 to 1970 and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to recognize outstanding achievements among juniors and seniors in physics. Half of the scholarship is an interest-free loan that students begin to repay when they start their first jobs. Ryan commented “if I had to spend 20+ hours a week in the workplace, I would not have enough time to concentrate on my studies.”

Recipients of the Burke H. Miller Memorial Scholarship were Glenn Rueff of Tohatchi, NM, and Joel Buckley of Iberia, MO. This $1,000 scholarship was established by the Miller family to commemorate the academic achievements of their son, Burke, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in physics in 1969 and later died during the Vietnam War. The award is for promising and dedicated students in physics.

Steve Alferink of St. Louis, MO, received the Leon E. Woodman Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship was established by the Woodman family in honor of Dr. Leon E. Woodman, Chair of the Physics Department from 1919 to 1948. It is offered to students in physics who are of good moral character, maintain a satisfactory grade point average, and are in financial need.

In addition to the above endowed scholarships, which are usually awarded to juniors and seniors, the department awarded Special Departmental Scholarships to the following students, who range in academic standing from sophomores to seniors: Jennifer Adams, St. Louis, MO; Dan Chitwood, Barnhart, MO; James Dent, Jonesboro, AR; Carmen Doudna, Barnesville, OH, and William Halliburton, Moberly, MO. Jennifer said of her scholarship “As a new student in the physics department, the scholarship not only helped me financially, but also helped me to feel welcomed and supported in the department. The Physics Department has a closer relationship with their students than many other larger departments and that support is shown in many ways, one being in the form of scholarships.”

To Contact UMR Physics

If you would like to contact us for any reason, you can reach us by phone at (573) 341-4781 and by email at physics@umr.edu. You are also cordially invited to check out our evolving Web page at http://www.umr.edu/~physics.