

Students to benefit from software agreement

COMPUTER SOFTWARE worth about \$8.4 million is being made available free to 1500 University of Adelaide students thanks to a world-first agreement negotiated by the Faculty of Engineering.

Mathworks and Ceanet Pty Ltd (the US-based manufacturers and Australian distributors of Matlab products, respectively) are delivering sets of Matlab software to engineering students free of charge for teaching and homework use. The individual academic value of the software packages is \$5600—for 1500 individual copies, this equates to \$8.4 million.

Matlab, which stands for Matrix Laboratory, is arguably the world's most popular engineering and technical computing software package, with more than two million users.

The University of Adelaide's Faculty of Engineering has been a significant user of Matlab for some time. The departments of Mechanical and Electrical & Electronic Engineering in particular have utilised Matlab for both teaching and research for years, and have developed a large volume of tutorial material based around the software.

"The faculty was able to leverage its past and present academic and financial commitment to the software in arranging the deal, which is the first of its kind in the world," said Dr Scott Snyder, the Faculty of

Engineering's Associate Dean for Information Technology.

"For the Mathworks company, this agreement guarantees that the country's top engineering students are fluent users of their software when they graduate. The Matlab deal is also another major step in what the faculty sees as its development of Information Technology in Teaching," he said.

Dr Snyder said providing students with the software they needed was a more practical approach than making it available via the internet.

"At present, the majority of technology-based teaching projects are being directed at putting material 'on the web'. But this general notion is often a poor one for engineering subjects, particularly those taught in latter years. Solution of non-trivial engineering problems requires computationally intensive mathematics software, which is difficult to run on a single host machine in response to web-based input from students.

"A more practical approach for undergraduate engineering education is to start with a suitable software package, one which can be made widely available on in-house computers and provided to students for home use, and develop teaching and learning programs around it."

The Engineering Faculty has four large computing suites and a plug-in

Dr Scott Snyder—\$8.4 million software agreement. Photo: David Ellis

suite for laptop computers which are open to students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Dr Snyder said Matlab would continue to be available to all students on these facilities, but he hoped many students would now decide to use the software on their home computers.

"About 75% of the student body has home access to computers. If they use the free software to solve tutorial

exercises at home, that will help free up in-house terminals which can be used by those students who don't have home computer access."

The free Matlab software was already being delivered to students on the Faculty of Engineering's 1998 CD-ROM, along with other software packages and electronic course notes, Dr Snyder said.

—David Ellis



Before the election for Convenor of Academic Board held late last year, I circulated a statement of my approach to the job. Limited to 150 words, the statement was a bit gnomic. Here I will expand on what I then wrote, and discuss further some of the issues facing the University of Adelaide community.

“My objective is to strengthen the position of Academic Board as the academic advisory body in the University, so enhancing the quality of University decisions,” is how I began my statement. What weakens Academic Board, and how can it be strengthened? Some answers will be suggested and remedies proposed in the report of the working party on Academic Board, which should be available in April.

Meanwhile, I suggest that a major source of weakness is that a structural transition is still being completed—the transition from a University of Faculties with elected Deans, an Education Committee and an elected Executive Committee, to one of Divisions with appointed Heads, an Academic Board, and central management team all but one of whom are appointed.

Academic Board is yet to meet with a membership that includes all from the central management team: most members of the team have taken up their posts only recently; the last appointee, the Director of Finance & Infrastructure, is to start later this month.

Among other things, Academic Board provides a two-way channel of information, by helping the Vice-Chancellor’s Committee collect dispersed knowledge of needs and possibilities, by providing an opportunity for Departmental and other leaders to hear what the VCC believes are the “major issues for the University that are coming over the horizon, internally and externally, that require serious policy attention” (as the Richardson working party put it); and by gathering creative ideas for policy response.

Academic Board generates academic policy advice for transmission to Council and the Vice-Chancellor, especially on matters that



END OF THE ASIAN MIRACLE?

Australia has spent the last decade trying to attach itself to the Asian Economic Miracle. Is it now going to deflate with the Asian Economic Meltdown? On Friday 3 April the Division of Humanities & Social Sciences will present a public Forum to investigate these issues.

Speakers include Dr Bob Catley, Associate Professor Christopher Findlay, Professor Purnendra Jain, Dr Greg O'Leary and Associate Professor Lesley Potter.

The Forum will provide an opportunity to listen to some resident specialists on Asia and to engage in discussion on a range of economic, political and social challenges the Asian nations confront today, especially in the aftermath of the recent Asian financial crisis.

• 3 April, Lecture Theatre 102, Napier Building, from 2.30pm to 5.00pm. Further information: Purnendra Jain, tel 8303 4688, fax 8303 4388, email <pjain@arts.adelaide.edu.au>.

LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

Enrolments are now open for the University of Adelaide's Continuing Education language program, which this year will offer courses in 13 languages.

Year-long language courses begin in mid-April, with intensive "survival" classes for travellers mid-year. Two "Vietnamese in the Workplace" courses are also scheduled mid-year.

Continuing Education, under the leadership of Aggie Lim, is this year also offering 25 continuing professional education courses in interpersonal communication, professional and personal development, supervisory development and leadership, management and business development.

Brochures on both the languages and professional development programs are now available from Continuing Education (tel 8303 4777).

COLIN HORNE ON BOOKS

Emeritus Professor Colin Horne is the guest speaker for the next in the monthly "Books in My Life" series organised by the Friends of the State Library.

Colin Horne was Jury Professor of English at the University of Adelaide, and a former Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He has chaired the Adelaide Festival Writers' Week Committee and is an Honorary Life Member of that committee and of the Friends of the State Library.

• Wednesday 1 April at 1.00pm. Institute Building, North Terrace. Admission \$5 (\$3 concession and Friends of the State Library).

DESTINATION ADELAIDE A MUST

South Australian academics have been urged to attend this year's "Destination Adelaide" exhibition as the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority (ACTA) continues to target the tertiary education conference market.

The exhibition is to be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre and

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- Brochures for delegate satchels
- Advice on conference facilities, venues and catering

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ALUMNI *NEWS*

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
HOMEPAGE

The Alumni Association now has its own homepage at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/alumni> or it can be accessed from the University's page at [www](http://www.adelaide.edu.au)

GLEN OSMOND: 2-3 br house, unfurn (some b-ins), walking distance to Waite, no pets, lawns mown, close to schools & transport. \$200 pw + bond. Ph 8379 4869.

HIGHGATE: Share unit, close to transport, 10 min walk to Waite. Ph Katherine 8210 0435.

MILE END: Lge rm to let in share house (1 male & 1 female), close to shops, transport & city. Suit mature student or professional. Avail immediately. Ph Anna 8351 7168 (after 5pm).

MODBURY: Non smoker wanted to share house with study close to shops & transport, quiet area. \$75 pw + Bond \$300. Refs required. Ph 8265 3854 after 6pm.

NORTH ADELAIDE: 1 br, fully furn flat, swimming pool. \$120 pw. Ph 8267 1081.

WINDSOR GARDENS: Furn house with 2 br + study, suit visiting postgrad student. Avail now to end of year. \$150 pw. Ph 8369 2220.

ALPACAS: Diversify your investment portfolio. Selection of pregnant females. Total management & agistment avail. Only 25 mins from city at Lower Hermitage. Ph John or Kathy Holzberger 8380 5454.

BICYCLE: men's 12 spd, lights, pump, lock, full tools, clips, helmet. \$70. Ph 8268 2530.

CAMIRA: SL JE 87 sedan, silver, 5 speed, 2 ltr EI, air, towbar, exc cond, reg until 30 June 98. VNB 070. \$4,950. Ph 8266 5570 (after 7pm).

COMPUTER: Mac IIVX 8/230, plus 14" colour monitor, \$1,500. Laserwriter IIg printer, \$1,200. Ph 8267 5004 (after 7pm).

COMPUTER: Laptop Compal 4/120, Microsoft Office, Word 6, Excel 5, Power Point 4, etc. \$400. Ph 8297 1848 (after 8pm).

DESK: Solid pine, 4 drawers, exc cond, \$150 ono. Ph 8332 5982.

FORD LASER: 1982, 4 door, new tyres, good cond,

urgent sale. UJO 044. \$2,900 ono. Ph 8337 2651 (after 7pm).

HOUSEHOLD GOODS: Microwave, furniture, TV, video, fridge, washing machine, etc. Ph 8332 2445 or 8303 3209 (w).

KEYBOARDS: Ensoniq KS-32 piano action MIDI studio, 76 key with on-board sequencer, \$1,220. Roland MC-500 sequencer with disk drive & extra software, \$650. Ph 8276 5082 (ah).

MISC: Student desk, pine estapol finish, \$95. Pine shelves, \$45. Sharp push button TV, 50cm, \$80. 2 drawer CD cabinet, \$10. Kenwood turntable, \$45. Yamaha tape deck, \$45. Wicker screen, \$55.

Bathroom scales, \$10. Lge wicker easy chair, \$15. Vinyl swivel office chair, \$35. Plus more. Ph 8373 2256 or 8274 1849 (evenings) or email: jraftery@camtech.net.au

MISC: Modern, firm single ensemble with bed head, \$40. Shopping trolley, \$18.

Ph Gail or Vlad 8346 0482.

MISC: Westinghouse 289 ltr upright deep freezer, \$200. Complete white colonial kitchen, wall oven, hot plate, double sink, ideal for holiday home, \$450. 4 traditional light fittings. Ph 8291 4128.

MISC: Phillips TV, \$125. Braun mixer, \$75. Leather briefcase, \$55. Wardrobe, \$55. Food processor, \$30. New pedestal fan, \$45. Lowboy, \$40. Cordless kettle, \$45. Sunbeam kettle, \$35. Food warming tray, \$30. All items in exc cond. Ph 8266 5570 (after 7pm).

PERSIAN RUG: New original rug, 1 x 1.5m, wool, rich colours, colourfast, perfect cond. \$800 ono. Ph 8338 4152.

SCUBA GEAR: Oceanic BCD, Datamax dive computer, Oceanic Delta regulator & Alpha 3 secondary reg, Sherwood cylinder with scuba pack. \$1,200 ono. Ph 8234 9499 or 8322 7637 (ah).

SIGMA: 1981 sedan, auto,

air cond, stereo, very good motor. SVO 911. Ph 8332 2445 or 8303 3209 (w).

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