Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MCCC ALUM AWARDED CHANCELLOR'S MEDALLION BY UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN

MONROE, Mich. – Monroe County Community College alum Matthew Smudz has been awarded the Chancellor's Medallion by the University of Michigan–Dearborn College of Engineering and Computer Science.

The Chancellor's Medallion is an award given every term at UM-Dearborn to the highest-ranking graduating senior from each academic unit. Students are selected based on their scholarship, leadership and service.

Smudz and three other UM-Dearborn students won first place in March at the Imagine Cup Software Design Competition in Southfield, a regional competition sponsored by Microsoft. The team went on to receive honorable mention honors in the national finals.

The competition's theme was "Imagine a World Where Technology Helps Solve the Toughest Problems." Smudz's team tackled hunger and environmental sustainability by promoting the reuse of materials. The team's proposed solution matched people in need to local suppliers with a surplus, using geographically-aware software accessible through a mobile phone or the Internet.

"That was really the first time I used my computer skills for something altruistic," Smudz said. "I enjoyed learning that I could use my abilities to help people around the world. It was also great interacting with Microsoft and getting feedback."

(more)

Smudz, a home-schooled student, dual-enrolled in the MCCC computer science program while finishing his high school studies at Clonlara School in Ann Arbor when he was 15 years old. He said that if he hadn't been home-schooled, he probably wouldn't be in computer programming.

"The beauty of homeschooling is that it's so flexible, so malleable; it gave me the chance to pursue interests that I couldn't pursue in other schooling," he said. "Homeschooling was a great experience for me because it helped me learn how to be self-motivated and self-directed."

At MCCC, Smudz studied under Chuck Kelly, associate professor of computer information systems.

"It was a pleasure to have Matthew Smudz in my classes, and I am thrilled for him on the recognition he has received," Kelly said. "Matthew has a passion for computer science that is clearly reflected in his success."

He enrolled at UM-Dearborn in winter 2009 and graduated in May. Smudz achieved a perfect overall grade point average of 4.00, was on the Dean's list all four semesters and earned University Honors twice. He was a member of the All-Michigan Academic Team, Phi Theta Kappa and the Association of Computing Machinery.

Smudz said his collection of achievements give him a sense of gratitude, not pride.

"I don't feel proud so much [as I do] lucky to have been able to interact with such great people in my field," Smudz said. "I feel really fortunate that I've worked with great teammates and great professional developers."

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