

NEWS RELEASE

Dads Association
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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Dads Association Recognizes Certificate of Merit Recipients

URBANA –The Dads Association at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign recognizes the achievements of three individuals and one student organization at their annual banquet held during Dads Weekend. The Certificate of Merit Award recognizes a student, a faculty member, a staff member and a registered student organization for their contributions to the improvement of the University and the community. Recipients receive a framed certificate, an engraved mantle clock and a cash award. Recipients recognized at this year’s banquet held on Friday, Nov. 10, 2006 were:

Outstanding Staff

Dr. Charles Olson has served as the Assistant Dean for Student Development and Career Services in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences since 1979. His responsibilities include advising students and student groups, coordinating recruitment efforts for the college, administering scholarship programs, and providing opportunities for students to gain internship experience and obtain employment.

Dean Olson organizes a successful Career Expo Day every fall. He is in charge of administering scholarships to worthy recipients with awards totaling approximately \$1,000,000 per year. Dr. Olson has served as the Co-Chair of the campus Illinois Leadership Initiative that implemented a Leadership Certificate available to all UIUC students and is currently serving as the lead contact from UIUC on a USDA Challenge grant to promote leadership for future leaders that involves the University of Wisconsin and Purdue University.

Dean Olson was nominated by several of his colleagues. One nominator said, “Dean

Olson embodies the mission of the College of ACES. He engages everyone—students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, potential employers, the public— with whom he comes in contact. The University of Illinois and the College of ACES couldn't ask for a more personal and productive ambassador and recruiter!"

Outstanding Faculty

Professor Samuel Kamin is an Associate Professor of Computer Science, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Chief Advisor. His responsibilities include, but are not limited to, research, teaching, academic advising, curriculum development, outreach, and mentoring. Kamin has been awarded the Stanley H. Pierce Faculty Award in 2001 and the Campus Award for Excellence in Advising Undergraduate Students in 2005.

Professor Kamin's nominators proclaimed him as an "extraordinarily dedicated, compassionate, and valuable member of the Computer Science community." His award-winning advising efforts have impacted hundreds of computer science students since he took over these responsibilities in 1999. Kamin not only provides quality advice to students who are looking for answers, but he also runs many community-building activities and workshops, enthusiastically participates in student activities, and envisions improvements in the diversity of the student body.

An especially noteworthy contribution over the last 3 years is his leadership of a multi-institution National Science Foundation program called "Building Communities", which is an outreach effort to encourage women to enter the computer science field. At UIUC, this program has doubled the recruitment and retention rate of the underrepresented group in computer science.

Professor Kamin has earned this award because of his outstanding academic advising and mentoring to undergraduate students, his impact on the Computer Science department and on the University as a whole, and his commitment to improvement.

Outstanding Student

Whitney Wright, a senior pursuing an English major in the College of Liberal Arts and Science, has been regarded as a genuine well-rounded woman with an outstanding academic record and dedication to the community through her service on a local and national level.

Throughout Wright's years at UIUC, she has maintained an excellent GPA, James Scholar status, a Dean's List regular, a member of two honor societies, and has won many awards and scholarships. Wright has been awarded with the Alfred and Norma Snap Scholarship Award from the College of Education, the Lillian Terwilliger award from the English department, the Panhellenic Involvement Scholarship, the Mawanda Senior Honorary Society Award, and more.

Wright has not only been actively involved in many activities and extracurricular events, but she has also held offices and leadership positions within them. She was a recruitment counselor, a member of the University of Illinois Formal Panhellenic Recruitment, the President of Alpha Phi Sorority, a member of Campus Crusade for Christ Christian Fellowship, and has been a Small Group Leader. Wright has been an AVID tutor at Champaign Central High School, a private swim instructor, a receptionist in the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, and a server at Alamo Steakhouse in her home town, Mattoon, IL.

Wright's many nominators proclaimed much praise for her. One nominator said, "Her decision to enter the field of Education is thoughtful and appropriate. She has an innate passion for literature, the enthusiasm of a caring teacher, and the leadership skills of an administrator. She is dedicated to education and the larger community. My most vivid recollection of Whitney is her dedication to her family and her desire to work with children. Her ability to balance the demands of her schoolwork and her contributions to the community have made a strong and lasting impression on me."

Outstanding Student Organization

Chi Epsilon, the National Civil Engineering Honor Society, was established on the Urbana-Champaign campus in 1922. Chi Epsilon has grown to roughly 120 Chapters across the United States with a membership of more than 100,000.

Dedicated to the purpose of maintaining and promoting the status of civil engineering as an ideal profession, Chi Epsilon seeks to recognize and develop the characteristics fundamental to the success of civil engineering students. To contribute to the improvement of the profession, Chi Epsilon fosters the development and exercise of sound traits of character and technical ability among civil engineers, as well as social poise with respect to the larger community, toward an ever higher standard of professional service.

Chi Epsilon was selected by the U of I Engineering Council as the “Most Improved Society” in 1997. Recent search projects have included: volunteering at a Champaign soup kitchen, cleaning up the Salt Fork River, and cleaning up Busey Woods.

One nominator for Chi Epsilon said, “They have consistently served the Department and the community. Their focus on student-faculty collegiality addresses a special need in our large department. We have about 500 undergraduates and 50 faculty members, and it has always been a challenge to build links between students and faculty. Chi Epsilon consistently puts forth an effort that pays important dividends. The members of Chi Epsilon are future leaders, people who will rise to positions of authority that will have opportunities in the future to control decisions that affect groups far beyond themselves.”

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