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UMM team takes first in computer competition

Summary: One of two UMM teams who participated in the 2006 Digi-Key Collegiate Computing Competition placed first overall. "In fact," declared Nic McPhee, UMM computer science faculty and the group's adviser. "UMM's name was called at least once in the results for every event at this year's event."

(October 25, 2006)-One of two teams from the University of Minnesota, Morris who participated in the 2006 Digi-Key Collegiate Computing Competition placed first overall. "In fact," declared Nic McPhee, UMM computer science faculty and the group's adviser. "UMM's name was called at least once in the results for every event at this year's event."

The Algonauts team, comprised of Tyler Hutchison, Andy Korth, Scott Lembcke and Daniel Selifonov, took first place overall, based on the results of three major events: a one and one-half hour short programming problem event, a one-hour math/logic problem event and a one-hour long programming problem event. Each student on the Algonauts team received a \$200 award and UMM's Computer Science discipline will receive a \$3,000 prize.

"Competing at programming contests like Digi-Key is a great opportunity to hone your programming skills," said Korth. "It's fun to apply the concepts we learned in our classes to a competition. It's also a great experience for working on your teamwork skills. All of the [UMM] students had a great time. We (The Algonauts) were actually pretty surprised to have won first place - there was a lot of room for us to improve."

The Algonauts also took first place in the opening ice-breaker event, where teams were asked to build the longest bridge they could using uncooked spaghetti and very sticky marshmallows. The Algonauts' bridge spanned more than 50 inches, making it well over a foot longer than the second-place bridge. McPhee was also part of a five-member faculty team that produced the longest faculty bridge at just over 30 inches long.

Digi-Key also had two informal Blender events where teams had to scan images that were displayed for a few seconds and identify how they fit into a theme. The Algonauts took first place in the first of these blenders. The second UMM team, 133t (pronounced "Leet"), consisting of Brandon Lehner, Andy Mitchell and Jason Swanson, took third place in the second blender.

To cap off the day's highlights, Scott Lembcke's name was drawn to win one of the two iPod door prizes.

UMM has placed at least one team in the top three every year since 2003, including a second- and third-place finish in 2004. This is the first time that a UMM team has won the top spot.

"Congratulations to all the students involved!" exclaimed McPhee. "Thanks also to UMM computer science alumnus Dan Flies '04, who first learned of the competition and arranged the teams' initial invitation in 2002.

Representatives from Digi-Key will visit UMM on Tuesday, Nov. 28, to present the discipline with their check and the

bronze traveling trophy, which will be displayed until next year's competition.

For more information about the Digi-Key competition visit

[Digi-Key](#) .

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