

## Technology students learn from "real-world" projects

"Proud" isn't the word. It isn't strong enough. When Mike Tarn began to describe the accomplishments of the students in his IS 482 class, he was definitely glowing.

Tarn's course catalog description defines the course as: Design and Implementation with DBMS Programming: A course addressing the latter part of the life cycle of analysis and logical design concerned with physical design, programming, testing and implementation of the system.

His class members had been divided into five information engineering groups each assigned with the development of a "real-world database system analysis and design project." Three groups were assigned in-house projects needed by various Chowan departments; one tackled a medical organization prototype and the other developed a tracking system for a Winton, N.C. business.

Working on an Academic Advising System, Project Manager Ricardo Arias '97, IE Specialist Renee Felts '97 and IE Specialist Mike Blake '98 first studied the problem by consulting with faculty members. The group found that the current advising process included paper mountains of printed information with no means of instantaneous reporting. It was time consuming, costly and inefficient.

Proposing an automated process, designed to provide faculty and staff members with network access to student records from individual offices, the group utilized the IE (Information Engineering) Advantage CASE (Computer Assisted Software Engineering) Tool, which was downloaded from the Internet at no cost, to design a system that allows queries, provides instant report writing and produces mailing labels.

Tarn likes to allow students the opportunity to investigate problems and learn through experience. "Our area here is very, very competitive today. If you only learn the methodology, you really cannot do too much because most companies do not want to spend money in training. They expect to see applicants fully trained." He gestured across the



Ricardo Arias '97 demonstrates the Academic Advising system developed for use by Chowan faculty to fellow system engineers Renee Felts '97 and Mike Blake '98. Professor Mike Tarn (left) looks on.

table at the project engineers, smiled and said, "like them."

Prepared for a position as system analyst or programmer, Ricardo Arias '97, of Costa Rica, feels ready for the job market. "Since we started [the project] I've been working on my own. I know the process and I know the drills you have to go through . . . interviews, current report studies and modifications to the system, etc. I think I'm qualified now to take on a job that will require me

to create databases because I'll feel comfortable with what I know right now," he explained.

Other class projects included a housing database system developed by Laurel Campbell '98 and Amy Rawls '98, a motor vehicle database system by Steve Greenberg '98 and Quentin LaWare '98, a computer equipment tracking system by Kay Vinson '98 and Erica Cherry '97 and a patient tracking system by Michelle Copeland '97.

Students develop a "real-world database system analysis and design project"

## Sigma Tau Delta chapter installed at Chowan

It was like stepping back in time for John Davis, professor of English, as he signed the charter of Sigma Tau Delta as sponsor. He recalled signing another original charter installing the English honorary society at Alabama's University of Montaville as a student.

The special ceremony took place April 3 in Marks Hall Auditorium. Elaine Hughes, national president of Sigma Tau Delta and a former classmate of Davis' at Montaville, was on hand to install the new Alpha Zeta Rho chapter. Hughes carried the original charter from Montaville to the event, listing both her name and Davis' as charter members thirty years ago.

The society recognizes high achievement in English literature and language in undergraduate, graduate and professional studies, promotes interest in the subject and fosters all aspects of English study, including creative and critical writing.

Sigma Tau Delta publishes *The Rectangle*, a literary magazine, *The National Newsletter* and *Scholars' Essay Series*. It awards a \$1,000 fellowship in creative writing, presents cash awards in poetry, critical writing and short story, conducts international and regional conventions, and awards annual \$1,000 scholarships and several "Outstanding Chapter" awards of \$100 each. With more than 400 chapters in Canada, Europe and the U. S., Sigma Tau Delta offers opportunities to join others interested in English language and literature on the local, regional and international levels.

Installed during the ceremony were students Robin E. Adair '97, Christy Harrell '97, Kristopher R. Howell '98 (elected secretary), Mark E. Long '97, Angela Lowery '97, Lewis Smith '98, Barbara Jo Story '99 (elected president) and Alecia Danielle Vesey '99. New faculty initiates included Richard Gay, associate professor of English, and Kenneth Wolfskill, professor of English.



Elaine Hughes (left), national president of Sigma Tau Delta, and John Davis (right), professor of English, install Chowan's Alpha Zeta Rho chapter during ceremonies in Marks Hall Auditorium.

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