

Latest technology provides new classes

By Michael Pauciello
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Imagine sitting in class as the television screen in front of you shows a teacher 300 miles away who is talking too fast for you to comprehend.

Before you fall too far behind, you open your mouth to ask him to slow down and a camera turns to you so that teacher can see who is asking the question. He slows

down and you are back on track.

In the near future, UNCA students will have the opportunity to audit graduate level courses in computer science taught at Duke, Chapel Hill and North Carolina State while remaining on the UNCA campus, according to Dr. Wayne Lang, chairman of UNCA's computer science department.

By fall semester 1988, UNCA will offer such classes

to students, faculty and other members of the community through a \$5.7 million microwave link to the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina, said Lang.

"The courses offered will be in the field of computer science and microelectronics," said Lang.

The research triangle schools will offer credit for these classes to computer science graduates through the link, he said.

Coinciding with this link, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded the UNCA computer science department a \$13,000 grant for the purchase of equipment, known as Computer-Aided Design (CAD) workstations.

"The CAD workstations would be necessary lab equipment for the study in these graduate courses," said Lang.

NSF will cover half the cost with something called a matching grant, expecting UNCA to match their amount to cover the \$26,000 cost of the equipment, according to Lang.

NSF awarded the grant to UNCA to help support a new upper-level UNCA computer science course on designing microcomputers, said Lang.

The course will teach a technology called CMOS, which prevents heat stress generated by large computer circuitry, according to Lang.

"Heat is a real problem with complex chips," said Lang, because of the number of circuits. The CMOS chip, Lang explained, produces less heat.

Lang is currently working with NASA on software designed to test a CMOS chip that will operate in the heated environment of deep space. Lang is working on the project with two UNCA students as part of the undergraduate research program.

Although the department purchased the new equipment for the development of a particular course, it would use it in the undergraduate research program, said Lang.

"There's no doubt that projects will come out of it

that will be quite suitable (for the program)," said Lang.

The new equipment will also benefit the surrounding community, he added.

"This new equipment and course plus the UNCA-MCNC microwave link is a first step in the development of high-technology support for existing industries in Western North Carolina and for potential new industries moving into the region," said Lang.

"If someone had a particular circuit they would like to design, they could take the course and use the equipment to create the circuit they had in mind," explained Lang.

"A number of townspeople, students and faculty would be especially interested in the courses now that we have this equipment," said Lang.

Engineering drawing, architectural modeling and artistic design are among the equipment's possible uses, said Lang.

The work stations include 19-inch color monitors which display an array of 256 colors with the clarity of a 35mm color slide, according to Lang.

The Microwave Link will be operational in September in a temporary classroom since the new science building will not be ready, according to Lang.

The computer science department will not offer the new class in microcomputer design until the new building is ready.

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