RIT’s distinguished

Each year, RIT honors alumni from each of the Institute’s eight colleges for their outstanding achievements. This year’s Rochester Institute of Technology Distinguished Alumni Award for the College of Liberal Arts went to Professional & Technical Communication alumnus, Martin Tomasi.

As an RIT student graduating at a time when his B.S. degree, academic skills and personal drive could take him places many others would only dream of, Martin (Marty) Tomasi set off to give his all to the new technology age. His achievements throughout the past decade contributed to naming him this year’s Distinguished Alumnus for the College of Liberal Arts.

With an RIT Associate’s degree in Computer Science and a Bachelor’s degree in Professional & Technical Communication, Tomasi went on to receive a Master’s degree in Technical Communication from North Carolina State University. Clearly, he has been quite busy since his graduation from the PTC program in 1990.

Tomasi has thus far worked at many prestigious and innovative companies in his career: Deloitte & Touche Consulting, IBM Research and SAS Institute. At SAS, he now holds the position of Chief Web Application Architect.

“The opportunities that RIT gave me in the late 1980s,” says Tomasi, “helped to make me uniquely qualified to take advantage of the possibilities presented by Internet technologies in the mid 1990s.” Through his own opportunities, his position allowed him to hire other PTC alumni as well.

Besides working, Marty has contributed to research and scholarship. He has taught courses in technical and business communication at North Carolina State University. He has also published in Technical Communication and received from The Society for Technical Communication in 1999.

On October 13, Tomasi was honored at an Award banquet where the PTC department chair, Dr. Bruce Austin, gave an enthusiastic speech highlighting Tomasi’s accomplishments. Austin summed up Tomasi’s academic and professional career by saying, “Marty possesses exactly the attributes this institution cherishes and strives to foster: intelligence, technical expertise, a gift for leadership, and a commitment to life-long learning.”

Beyond communication

While most Liberal Arts students worked, took courses, or just spent time on the beach during the summer break, the Department of Communication (DOC) was busy at work putting the final touches on their new M.S. degree program: Communication & Media Technologies (CMT).

Dr. Bruce Austin, the Department Chairperson, states that, “The graduate program was initiated because of the Department’s and the Institute’s strong support for such a program.” DOC professors wanted a curriculum that graduate students could use to enhance their knowledge of the history, law, ethics, research methods, and technology involved with communication.

Mike Saffran, a CMT student, is also the Senior News Specialist for RIT’s University News Service. Saffran states, “I had been interested in seeking my Master’s degree for many years, but had not found a program specifically matching my interests until this program was introduced. This program’s curriculum ideally suits my interests and long-term educational and professional objectives. I am particularly excited about its blend of communication theory, business and information-technology coursework.”

CMT currently has five matriculated students, a number of CMT courses are presently being taught by current DOC professors. The Department is conducting a nationwide search for two additional communication professors to be hired beginning in September, 2002.

The Department is marketing the program largely via the Web. Two thousand posters were recently mailed to other colleges & communication departments all across the country. The bright, striking posters are intended to persuade prospective students to check the CMT website and consider applying. Austin comments, “The wise guy copy (text) for the poster, its scratchy type font and the colors used are all designed to grab your attention and then ‘drive’ you to our website.”

Faculty and students in the DOC are excited about the new graduate program. The CMT program is expected to expand as more course and faculty are added and more students apply. Further information can be found on the CMT website at www.rit.edu/CMT. The future for this program looks bright.”