ACS Foundation awards welter of new scholarships

THE ACS has awarded a record number of scholarships in the past two months as the new academic year kicks off, paving the way for over 145 students to embark on a career in ICT.

ACS Foundation executive director John Ridge said the Foundation awarded 55 Work Integrated Learning (WIL) scholarships last December, each worth $28,000 to the student and providing them with relevant industry work experience with the donor company.

An estimated 40 more WIL scholarships of similar value were due to be awarded in January/February. Additionally, around 50 Innovation, Creativity and Transformation (ICT) scholarships designed to ease the start-up costs for new students and attract more students into ICT courses will also be awarded.

The ICT scholarships are typically worth $2000 to $3000 each, but can range as high as $25,000.

"We are delighted to be able to provide a growing number of students with valuable incentives to study ICT, as well as paving the way for the WIL students to undertake that all-important work experience that employers want to see when hiring graduates," Ridge said.

"This is a great start to the new year, however more needs to be done if we are to rebuild our graduate pipeline to the level required by the Australian ICT sector, which is currently struggling with major skills shortages."

He called on ACS members to help reverse the graduate shortage by actively encouraging more young people to embrace an ICT career.

"Skills shortages really mean job opportunities," he said, "which is more the message we need to get across to the parents and careers advisers who are influencing students' decisions and preferences. I do not believe that students have really lost interest in an ICT career, but due to the advice they are getting their interest might not always translate into enrolments."

"Despite the strong and growing demand for ICT professionals in all areas of commerce and government, many students, parents and others are continuing to hang on to irrelevant stereotypes and perceptions dating back to the dotcom crash.

"We all need to start talking up the ICT profession, telling our children, friends and colleagues about our positive work experiences and highlighting the wide range of career choices and scholarship opportunities as a way of enticing more people to consider ICT."

Ridge said the ACS Foundation has dozens of scholarships on offer at any time and sometimes struggles to find appropriate candidates to fill them.

"While we always have a range of scholarships showing on the ACS Foundation Web site (www.acsfoundation.com.au), this is only the tip of the iceberg and our time and resource constraints, and the volume of scholarships, often mean that many scholarships do not always make it to being listed online.

"Students considering an ICT career should definitely check out the Web site to see if there is anything of interest in terms of available scholarships. However, even if they don't find what they're looking for there, they should always submit a generic scholarship application because we probably have other opportunities that will suit them."

He stressed that for high-quality candidates, the ACS Foundation will even approach employers as a way of creating the right kind of scholarship, rather than turning the student down.

"If a student meets our criteria, we will engage with employers on their behalf. Our major supporters like IBM, Agilent, Corporate Express, Motorola, Simbient and Tripoint are very proactive about connecting with quality candidates and we are happy to provide that introduction," he said.

You can help grow our industry

The ACS Foundation is currently looking for sponsors to help and encourage more young people to choose ICT as their career.

For as little as $1500 to $2000 (tax deductible), you can provide a student with basic start-up costs under the ACS Foundation's new Innovation Creativity and Transformation (ICT) scholarship program.

The ICT program allows a company or individual to sponsor a student through their first year of university, reducing their financial outlay and encouraging high-quality students to make ICT their first choice.

The Western Australian chapter of the ACS Foundation has written to local businesses and other industry stakeholders, asking them to make a tax-free contribution to helping a student embark on a career in technology. This is an initiative it is hoped will be replicated in other states and territories.

In most cases, the employer's contribution is matched at least in part by the university where the scholarship is awarded, giving the student up to $3000 towards the purchase of a laptop, software and textbooks, or turning one scholarship into two.

"We all know the tremendous opportunities that await young people who choose ICT. High paying salaries, flexible work conditions in a really global industry, the ability to drive change and travel opportunities are all just part of the package for many of our students," according to the foundation's executive director John Ridge.

"Funding a scholarship is a direct and real investment in the future of our industry. This is your invitation and opportunity to become a leader in the education and skilling of our future workforce.

"Of course, we are also looking for new sponsors for our major Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs worth between $25,000 and $35,000. These not only provide a substantial financial incentive to the student, but they give the sponsoring company the opportunity to provide real work experience to the scholarship student for up to 12 months during their study program."

Visit http://www.acsfoundation.com.au or call (02) 8296 4445.

World-class speakers confirmed for International Young ICT Professionals Conference

TO BE HELD IN ADELAIDE from 28-30 May, the conference is shaping up to be a challenging and stimulating journey for students, graduates and young ICT professionals.

Themed "Building A Successful ICT Career – Learn, Develop, Lead", the conference has a secured a high-level portfolio of speakers from Australia and overseas.

According to conference chair Debbie Timmins, the speakers will bring practical, real-life perspectives to a range of topics that are difficult to acquire from a book.

"The quality of speakers at the 2008 conference is simply astounding. The program features experts who are renowned not only on the Australian, but on the world-wide stage.

"We have been privileged to attract experts like project management guru Rob Thomsett, and author, lecturer, philosopher, futurist, corporate and social warrior Jonar Nader," she said.

Other include CEOs and CIOs of leading organisations such as IBM, Computer Sciences Corporation, Rising Sun Pictures and Peak Performance Coaching.

Debbie Timmins says the program is challenging, exciting and motivating.

"I know students, graduates and young ICT professionals will leave the conference with a plan for their future, a roadmap of how to get there, and enthusiasm for taking control of their career," she said.

The international conference will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Prices for students and graduates start at $149, and for ICT professionals, $399. Organisers expect the conference to be a sell-out. Early bird ends 31 March, so don't delay registering.

For further information visit www.acs.org.au/youngit/2008conference or e-mail youngit@acs.org.au

For sponsorship enquiries contact Simon Kwan (simon.kwan@acs.org.au) on (02) 9299 3666.

Carbon Neutral Computing
with Tom Worthington
Chair of the ACS Green Technology Group and Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Australian National University.

About the presentation…

A study sponsored by the ACS has shown that computers and telecommunications equipment in Australia generated 7.9mt of carbon dioxide in 2005; 1.52% of national emissions and more than the civil aviation industry.

The ACS issued a Policy Statement on Green ICT, which includes initiatives governments and ICT manufacturers can take to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions attributable to the use of ICT equipment.

In this presentation, Tom Worthington argues that individual ICT professionals, consumers and organisations can make a change through the computers they select and the way in which they are configured. He will demonstrate low cost, low power computers and discuss "thin client" computing using carbon neutral processors and virtualisation.

About the presenter…

Tom Worthington is a consulting ICT professional who represents his clients' interests with software engineers, hardware suppliers, contractors and other suppliers engaged on a computer project. Tom has been an expert witness in several court cases involving international patent, computer, web and Internet issues as well as advising governments and companies on ICT problems.

He is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at the Australian National University where he teaches the design of web sites, e-commerce and professional ethics. In 1999, he was elected a Fellow of the ACS for his contribution to the development of public Internet policy.

Tom is the founding chair of the ACS Green ICT Group, past president, Fellow and Honorary Life Member of the ACS, a voting member of the Association for Computing Machinery and a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Perth, WA
15 April 2008

Bunbury, WA
16 April 2008

To register on-line visit
www.acs.org.au/wa

ICT Professionals Shaping Our Future

ACS267_1/08