

Erskine Fellow brings cutting edge knowledge to Canterbury

Canterbury students have had the unique opportunity this term to learn about the effects of brain damage on speech and language from one of the leading experts in the field.

Professor Tom Marquardt is visiting as an Erskine Fellow in the Department of Communication Disorders during a sabbatical leave from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr Maggie-Lee Huckabee, one of the professor's former students and now a senior lecturer in the department, brought Professor Marquardt to Canterbury to teach students about speech motor control disorders that are associated with brain damage.

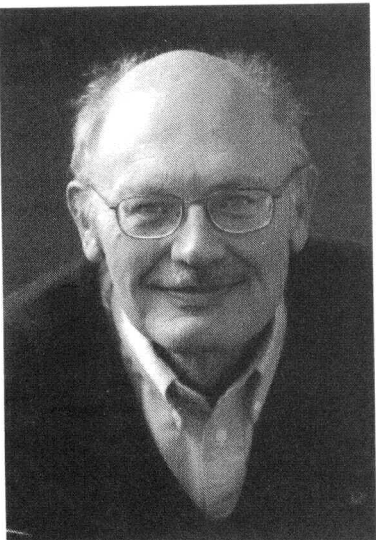
"I have enjoyed not being distracted by administrative duties and having time to focus on teaching and research," Professor Marquardt said.

In addition to teaching two courses on neuroscience and motor speech impairment, he has started work with lecturer Dr Catherine Moran on the fourth edition of a text called *Appraisal and Diagnosis of Speech and Language Disorders*.

Professor Marquardt has also taught two workshops in Auckland and Christchurch on his research into apraxia of speech, a motor speech disorder that can affect both children and adults, and new neural imaging approaches to studying speech and language. Health and education professionals as well as students attended these workshops to learn how to identify conditions such as apraxia and to find out about available treatment options.

Professor Marquardt's main research focus for more than 10 years has been on apraxia of speech, and in Texas he co-ordinates a programme for brain damaged adults and has seen more than a thousand individuals who suffer from disorders such as apraxia.

The professor is also interested in the effects of brain damage on bilingual individuals. He studies a



Professor Tom Marquardt

condition called aphasia, which can impair the ability of bilingual individuals to switch back and forth between languages while they are talking. A number of students who are interested in multicultural communication work with the professor under the Leadership Programme in Multicultural Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Texas.

Professor Marquardt also studies the effects of brain damage on people's ability to process emotion. "Some language is ambiguous and people with brain damage can lose their ability to distinguish between the different meanings."

The professor said he found Canterbury "peaceful" compared to his home institution, where classes can be as large as 600-700 students.

He has also been surprised at differences between the US and New Zealand training models. "I have been struck by the intensity of the curriculum for New Zealand students."

As for New Zealand as a whole, Professor Marquardt describes it as "a country like a postcard," where "the cows have better views than anywhere in the world."

Professor Marquardt is the third Erskine Fellow to visit the department this year. Earlier this semester the department hosted

Professor Robert Turner, an audiology expert from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. Professor Turner gave lectures in audiology to second year students and also taught aural rehabilitation to fourth year students. He was most impressed with Canterbury's undergraduate programme and said it compared favourably to LSU where speech language pathology and audiology is taught at the masters level.

The department is currently hosting its former head Dr Ilse Schwarz, who now heads the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at the University of Tennessee. During her six week visit Dr Schwarz is assisting with course work and consulting on curriculum.

Head of Department Professor Michael Robb believes the Erskine Fellowship programme has helped bring international recognition to the Department of Communication Disorders.

"In the past several years, the department has hosted a number of world renowned scholars who teach, mentor students and engage in a variety of research activities with faculty, staff and students. Many of these individuals continue to work with faculty and students when they return to their home university," Professor Robb said.

"On-going research programmes with our Erskine Fellows have resulted in a number of articles and student exchanges."

Laura Sessions 

Library rewards its users



Deputy Librarian Priscilla Read presents Christoph Siegert with a \$50 book voucher for taking part in the recent library survey.

Christoph, a fourth year physics student from Konstanz, Germany, was one of more than 2150 people who took part in the online survey. Anna Starke, Kathryn O'Boyle, and Michael Myers also received book vouchers for taking part in the survey.

The aim of the survey was to find out how staff and students think the library performs.

"The opinions of our users are valuable and will assist the library in understanding how it can best meet the needs of staff and students at the University of Canterbury Library," Ms Read said.

The survey results will be available in early November on the library's homepage.