

## JOINT PROGRAMS

# The best of both worlds

Students get theory and practice when they study in programs offered jointly by universities and colleges

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When passersby noticed an unusual-looking large cube that appeared for four days on a wall of the Sears building in Ottawa's busy Rideau Centre earlier this month, they were invited to respond, by sending a message via Twitter.

"We were trying to have some fun and make people aware of the possibility of combining art and technology," says Anthony Scavarelli, 28, a fourth-year student in Algonquin College's bachelor of information technology, interactive multimedia and design program, that is run jointly with Carleton University.

While the cube seemed like fun and games, it's part of the curriculum that has attracted scores of students like Mr. Scavarelli. "I've always been interested in art and mathematics and computers, as well. I wondered, how can you bring them together?" says Mr. Scavarelli, who was earlier enrolled in a math-physics program but was disappointed by the lack of creativity.

The cube asked questions, such as: What is love? What is justice? More than 200 people answered. In turn, the cube took random

words from various tweets and posted them on the wall.

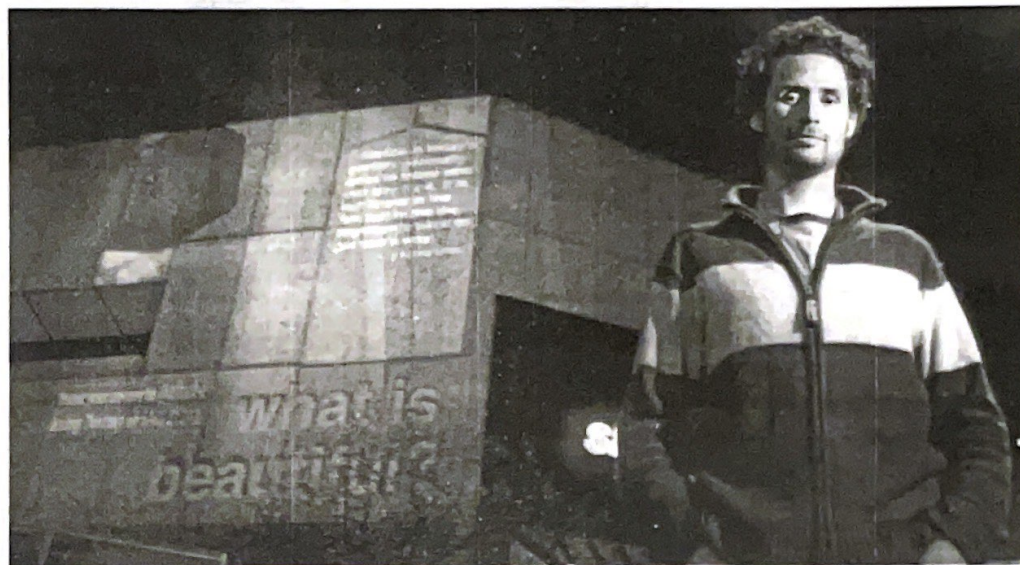
"It's a bit like refrigerator poetry," says Mr. Scavarelli, with a chuckle. "Doesn't make sense grammatically, but people can get their own meaning."

Made possible by Algonquin College and Artengine, an Ottawa-based centre that promotes electronic art, the cube looked real but relied on so-called projection mapping to create a three-dimensional object.

"Not only are they teaching us programming and theory at Carleton. But when we go to Algonquin, we get a lot of hands-on stuff," says Mr. Scavarelli, adding that he is learning about the programming behind 3-D animation and creating interactive projects that use 3-D.

In another Algonquin College course, called design studio, Mr. Scavarelli works within a group that tests a variety of technologies and hardware to create interactive installations. "It would be difficult to do in another program. Usually, you have to concentrate on one area. In this course, we do pretty much everything."

Now in its seventh year, more than 200 students are enrolled in



Anthony Scavarelli, who is in an information technology and multimedia program run jointly by Algonquin College and Carleton University, at his art installation project in Ottawa. DAVE CHAN FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

the joint degree program. "We have more applicants than we can accept. There is quite a demand for the program," says James Acres, co-ordinator, noting that the creative arts industry is seeking graduates familiar with multimedia and technology.

Algonquin's and Carleton's students are exposed to a wide variety of skills, from video-game design to understanding programming languages, such as C++, and web design. "Our graduates are masters of the current technologies and will be shaping the technologies of tomorrow," says Mr. Acres.

One noted graduate from the class of 2008 is Ben Case. He is

special effects company that contributed to Hollywood movies such as *Transformers* and 2012.

Joint-degree programs are gaining popularity, says Terry Anne Boyles, vice-president, public affairs for the Ottawa-based Association of Canadian Community Colleges. "Institutions are looking for where they have common areas of expertise. They value the excellence and quality that each partner brings to the program and the opportunities they bring to students," says Ms. Boyles, adding that there are about 90 joint-degree programs across Canada.

For example, Nunavut Arctic College has partnered with Hal-

the Arctic. "It's the meshing together of knowledge and experience that these partners bring to the program."

For his part, Mr. Scavarelli is graduating next spring and says there are opportunities in the advertising world. Recently, he'd seen a 'virtual fish tank' in an American city that invited Twittered responses.

"It was advertising a cruise line," he says. "Twitter is huge, because you can reach a lot of people with a viral marketing campaign. Even if your installation is in one city, in Canada or the U.S., by using Twitter or Facebook, a lot of people will find out about it."

