

Students bring robots to life in Hyman Hall

By **ANDREW CAVETTE**
Staff writer

Move forward and stop. It's a simple task for most of us, but for a robot, that simple task takes a lot of programming and even then there is no guarantee.

Instructor David Patrick pressed a button on his laptop and looked over his students to the back of the room. Nothing happened. After a short delay, one of the many robots that lined the back of Room 120 in Hyman Hall spoke. "I am turning left," it explained and then, to prove a point, it did.

"I'm pleased when anything works in this place," Patrick said in amused displeasure.

Introduction to Robotics and Automation (CNET-115) is not about robot construction; it is an introduction to JavaScript programming, put together by Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) also helps fund the program at Ohlone. Students meet either Monday-Thursday at Irvington High School or in Hyman Hall on Fridays. The course was first offered in the Fall of 2005 and continues to satisfy the Physical

Science General Education requirements of the college.

The course is a first step in what will ultimately develop into a Robotics Program at the newly completed Newark Health, Science and Technology campus. According to a summary of the December 2004 Robotics Planning Meeting, the Robotics Program is seen as a potential flagship for the Newark technology programs because it employs skill sets that are applicable across many other technologies.

The robots are an enticement for the students. Patrick picked up one of the round, white machines, "Robots are a very visual way of seeing how a program works," he remarked. Having also taught the intermediate Linux course, Patrick joked, "You can only get so excited about drawing answer squares on the screen."

Ted Long is a student who already has some programming experience, but said he is taking the course because he wants to get into the field of robotics. The Friday class has only met three times this year, and so far Long has been learning the programming code

which allows the robots to speak. "I want to build one," Long said. He plans to buy a robotic kit available at places like Fry's Electronics.

The robots, which use the iRobot Create platform, cost about \$550. They are assembled ahead of time by Patrick with help from Professor Margery Segreaves.

All of the robots have names: Harry, Ron, Hermione, Malfoy, Voldemort among them. "One of the advantages of teaching the class is you get to name the robots," Patrick said with a smile.

The company, iRobot, is most famous for creating the robotic Roomba vacuum cleaner. The robots in Hyman Hall look similar to those self-propelled vacuums. According to the manufacturer, the iRobot Create platform also has an open cargo bay and a 25-pin expansion port which allows the user to add sensors, wireless connections, computers or other hardware like web cams.

The robots have some limited, built-in programming. "It can check out the wheels and (also) see if the power is low," Patrick noted. The complicated programming is done



Photo by Andrew Cavette

Computer Studies Instructor David Patrick holds 'Malfoy,' one of the many robots being programmed by Ohlone students in Hyman Hall this semester.

by the students utilizing a Linux-based central processing unit called QWERK. The robots in Hyman Hall are controlled through a USB adapter, which is wirelessly connected to a router in the classroom. The robots can be controlled from anywhere within the range of the wireless connection.

This is the first semester the iRobot Create platform has been used. Previously, the students worked with the LEGO Mindstorm Robot Invention System. Professor George Wong, who worked with

the LEGO system, is donating the Mindstorm robots to the Engineering department for use in Introduction to Engineering (ENGI-101).

If all goes well with the student's programming, Patrick hopes to have the robots compete in an obstacle course by the end of the semester. As a glimpse of what may be in store for the robotics program, the 2004 meeting summary also states Ohlone may be developing curriculum which will incorporate a model of the Mars Rover on loan from NASA.

International student enrollment doubles

By **MARGARITA KITOVA**
Staff writer

Ohlone is quickly becoming more popular among students from other countries. The current international student enrollment has doubled - from 63 to 135 since last year.

"International students" are the holders of F-1 visas with student status. Ohlone also has many students from other countries who

have legally immigrated to the U.S. and have Permanent Resident (Green Card-holder) status. Students come from more than 20 different countries. The countries with the most international students are China, India, Taiwan and Vietnam. We also have students from Africa, South America, Europe and Canada. There is even an applicant for the Spring 2008 semester from the Middle East—Baghdad, Iraq.

Most of the students are living

with local-area relatives, part of the large immigrant communities from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Pakistan and elsewhere in Fremont and the Bay Area.

International students now pay \$183 per unit in addition to the Enrollment Fee, which comes down to \$203 per unit and, as holders of F-1 student visas, they are required to take 12 or more units. For example, if an international student is taking 13.5 units for a semester

at Ohlone, they have to pay \$2,766. Even though prices have gone up, students from different countries are interested in studying in the US.

One thing that explains the increase in international students enrollment is Ohlone's new English Language Institute (ELI). The ELI is a program designed for non-native speakers of English, who wish and/or need to improve their English skills prior to enrolling in Ohlone College degree studies. Last

semester was the first semester of the program, and Ohlone had 12 international students in it. This semester, there are 27 students.

Foreign students are also happy with the freedom they have to choose the classes they wish to enroll in, which is different from the educational system in other countries. Sahir Nasir, international student from Pakistan said, "I really like the way the teachers here are involved with the students."

ASOC kicks off year with first meeting

By **BRIAN CHU**
Staff writer

The Associated Students of Ohlone College (ASOC) discussed plans for the coming year at the first meeting of the semester Tuesday.

The meeting opened with the ASOC reaffirming their mission statement, which was to meet the needs and concerns of the student body.

Various topics of student interest discussed included the cafeteria food, cell phone reception, the upgrade of the WebCT and WebAdvisor computer servers, the creation of a culinary arts division, the graffiti on the bathroom walls, the availability of wireless internet on campus and a better communication system between the ASOC and the student body, which included suggestions of weekly meetings and online forums.

The creation of a student union was also discussed, as well as more effective ways to advertise ASOC. "We should survey students for information and input and help people become more aware of what is happening and how we have a say in matters," said new ASOC senator Dan Zhou.

The most anticipated topic was

the news on the near completion of the new Newark campus. It will be the first college campus in the nation to achieve total "green" certification, adhering to the highest standards of ecological safety.

Ken Steadman, the ASOC representative at the Ohlone Board of Trustees, reported on the board's activities. He stated that it was important that the ASOC give the College Board of Trustees their input and assist it with their plans involving the frontage property. The Board plans to rent out the frontage area to develop property on it. Ideas included are upscale bookstores, restaurants and student housing. Proposals are expected to be in by Dec. 12. In the meantime, the ASOC, as well as the College Board of Trustees, welcomes any student input as to suggestions for the frontage property.

ASOC currently has three executive officer positions still open. They are as follows: legislative representative at large, secretary and treasurer. To qualify, an applicant must hold nine units, have a 2.75 GPA, answer a questionnaire and present a small speech to ASOC.

Along with positions open in the ASOC, Steadman plans to re-initiate the currently dormant Region

4 student government legislative zone, of which Ohlone is part of. He plans to create a legislative committee and has executive positions open with a possibility to translate to executive positions in the Region 4 student government legislation zone.

In regards to money requests, the men's basketball team, represented by coach and Physical Education instructor John Peterson, made a funds request to assist in the start up of fundraising efforts to help support their yearly costs. The Math League club also made a request for prize money for one of their sudoku challenge events as they prepare and train for state and national math competitions. "We aim to increase intellectual activity as well as the image of Ohlone in the Math and Science departments," said math

club representative Jun Fang.

At the end of the meeting the members of this year's ASOC student council, including executive

officers as well as senators, were sworn in by President Tatyana Hamady. "I'm looking forward to an exceptional year," said Hamady.

**Losing on the Lottery?
Try scoring on some
SCHOLARSHIPS!**

Find more
information
and scholarship
applications
online at:
www.ohlone.edu/org/scholarships

Applications Due by October 31, 2007



CAMfess.com
Confess Your Soul™

Share your secrets in secret™

Juicy gossip? Share it on video at www.camfess.com, anonymously.