

DCU Chancellor's Medal Citation
November 2009

Allan Dixon is an outstanding student and graduates today with a first class honours degree in Digital Media Engineering. As well as his academic achievements, he has also been extensively involved in numerous extracurricular activities, and today's award of the Chancellor's Medal is a testament to the level of excellence that Allan has achieved in both of these domains.

Allan is a very confident and outgoing person with a great personality, and is highly thought of by both fellow students and members of DCU faculty and staff. He made a number of important contributions to academic life in the University during his time as an undergraduate student: acting as a representative for his classmates on two occasions - Class Representative in 2005/2006 and as Engineering and Computing Student Convenor in 2006/2007 and contributing to the promotional activities of the University by undertaking the role of helper during DCU Open Days.

Allan was particularly active on the DCU social scene during his time with us. He was a member of the DCU Snowboarding and Surf'n'Sail Societies. On a number of occasions he contributed to the DCU Style Society by participating as a model in their annual Fashion Show. With an enthusiastic involvement in DCU Rag week, he also helped to raise money for Rag week charities.

His photography featured in a number of DCU publications: *An Tarbh*, *Campus Magazine*, *The College View* and the DCU student publication *FlashBack* and he also produced and directed a number of popular "YouTube" videos including:

- Video blogs for the contestants in the DCU Mini Brother (as opposed to Big Brother) competition, and
- Music videos of performers who appeared in the DCU Mini Brother house: Mickey Jo Harte and The Frank and Walters.

In addition to his accomplishments around the University, Allan also made a number of contributions to his local community in Wicklow when he helped raise awareness of the need for facilities, and contributed to a campaign to get a skate park for his area. As already noted, he is a keen audio-visual enthusiast and has used his skills to produce DVDs for the Drama Society at Arklow Community College and the Performing Arts Stage School in Avoca. A major success for Allan in this field was that, in 2006, he directed and produced a 10 minute video for the *Bebo* movie competition. This video was placed first in the competition winning Allan a prize of €2,500. The same video also went on to win the Best Creative Video category at the DCU Media Production Society *Hybrid Awards* in 2007.

But apart from his creative endeavours, Allan performed consistently well academically during his time as an undergraduate student, culminating in him being awarded a first-class honours degree today. Not only is he an extremely talented individual, he has put in long hours of hard work and study to meet his objectives.

He also demonstrated an excellent ability to apply his academic knowledge in a commercial setting during his 6 month INTRA placement which he organised this placement himself with Bebo Inc., who are based in San Francisco. His INTRA project involved developing a tool to enhance the operation of

the Bebo web site and his industrial tutor reported that Allan did an excellent job during his time with the company.

Allan continued to demonstrate a flair for project work when he returned to DCU after completing his INTRA placement, and his final year project resulted in the development of a unique new online social network called *Eventwolf* that takes the idea of YouTube but replaces videos with limitless types of events located on Google's rich interactive maps. Allan's project supervisor, his INTRA tutor and his business mentor in particular were all extremely complimentary about the quality of the project work that Allan completed during his undergraduate studies.

In February 2009, Allan was a finalist in DCU's Entrepreneurial & Social Society's "Bright Ideas Competition". The finalists presented their ideas to a panel in a "Dragon's Den" setting. The judging panel consisted of Richard Stokes, CEO, *Invent*, Donal O'Shea CEO, *Slidepath* and Bernard Hensey CEO, *Phive Plasma Technologies*. Allan was selected as the overall winner and received a cheque for €500 from the Dublin City Enterprise Board.

Allan's most notable entrepreneurial achievement though came later in 2009. He submitted a business proposal based on his final year project to the Enterprise Ireland Student Awards, and was ultimately selected as the overall winner of the prestigious Student Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 2009. This award was sponsored jointly by Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and Cruickshank Intellectual Property Attorneys. The competition, now in its 26th year, is designed to encourage innovation, promote enterprise and foster a spirit of entrepreneurship among third level students. A total of ten student teams from all around Ireland made it through to the final, and the final judging and awards ceremony took place at the University of Ulster, Coleraine in June 2009. Allan prepared an outstanding presentation and really impressed the judges on the day. His success in this competition is especially notable as he was the only finalist from Dublin, and the only solo entrant. As overall winner he received a cheque for €10,000.

To conclude, it is clear from Allan's achievements that he has a genuine appetite for success. He will be an excellent ambassador for DCU as a Digital Media Engineering Graduate and he is one of the great successes of this programme to date in terms of both his personal and academic achievements. Allan Dixon is, without doubt, a very worthy recipient of the Chancellor's medal, and the School of Electronic Engineering, the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and DCU wish him every success in his future life and career.