UConn expresses jubilation over gift

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installed, its use by students will be phased in over the next year. The programs, essentially, enable companies to manage a product’s lifecycle from the initial concept through its design, analysis, manufacturing, distribution, maintenance and retirement.

“We knew of them and approached them about a grant,” Amir Faghi, dean of the engineering school, said. “We needed something to excite high school students and had no ability and no money to do this.”

He said the School of Engineering provides scholarships of approximately $4,000 to about 200 graduating high school students each year.

After thanking UGS PLM vice president Dave Werner for “this extraordinary $146 million in-kind investment,” Faghi said the company’s products are used commercially by 41,000 customers worldwide.

“In the School of Engineering we work hard to offer our students the best and most dynamic engineering education possible so that our graduates are equipped to excel in the workplace,” Faghi said. “This grant recognizes the crucial role of industry in helping to educate tomorrow’s engineering students — armed with state-of-the-art design and problem-solving tools used by our nation’s leading manufacturers, our graduates will soar.”

He noted that General Motors, Boeing, Toyota, AT&T, IBM, Hitachi, Pratt & Whitney and General Dynamics use the same software systems EDS donated to the school under the grant. Students will be exposed to the new software from their first engineering course to their senior year.

Turning to research initiatives, Faghi said, during the last few years, new centers of excellence, within UConn’s engineering school, have been founded based on the need for 21st-century technologies.

Among them is the Connecticut Global Fuel Cell Center, established with $17 million from industry, government and the private sector. A second, the Center for Optics, Sensing and Tracking in Homeland Security, arose directly from the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

“Using the EDS investment as a springboard, I am pleased to announce the formation of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Engineering Education, Design and Computing within the School of Engineering,” Faghi said. “The institute is already operational and covers every aspect of engineering education.”

Speaking on behalf of all engineering students, Vermont native Meghan Quinn thanked EDS for the grant. She said she was attracted to UConn because of the engineering school’s strength and reputation.

“For example, in my senior design course, I’m a member of a four-person student-faculty team that works with engineers from a Connecticut company to generate engineering solutions to real-world problems.”

Simmons put it simply: “UConn has the number one men’s basketball team, the number one women’s basketball team and the number one school of engineering.”

Fran Funk

Dave Werner, vice president of UGS PLM Solutions, Northeast Region, speaks about the company’s $146 million software grant to the University of Connecticut School of Engineering on Thursday. UConn President Philip E. Austin, center, and U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, right, listen during the ceremony.