

Utmost Degree

UT Chattanooga makes history with its first Ph.D. graduate **BY CINDY CARROLL**

With the introduction of each of the doctoral degrees, UT Chattanooga's standing rises.

When Brian Lambert walked across the stage of the McKenzie Arena last December to receive his degree in computational engineering, he made history. Lambert became the first Ph.D. graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. UTC had already graduated students with the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree (D.P.T.) and is now launching a doctoral program in educational leadership, but Lambert assumed a place in history as the first to receive a Ph.D.

"I am very honored, if a little overwhelmed, to have been the first one out the door," he says. "It was a huge accomplishment for me, as it is for every Ph.D. student, to finally finish. At the same time, it was a huge accomplishment for the UT SimCenter at Chattanooga and UTC to have created such an outstanding program."

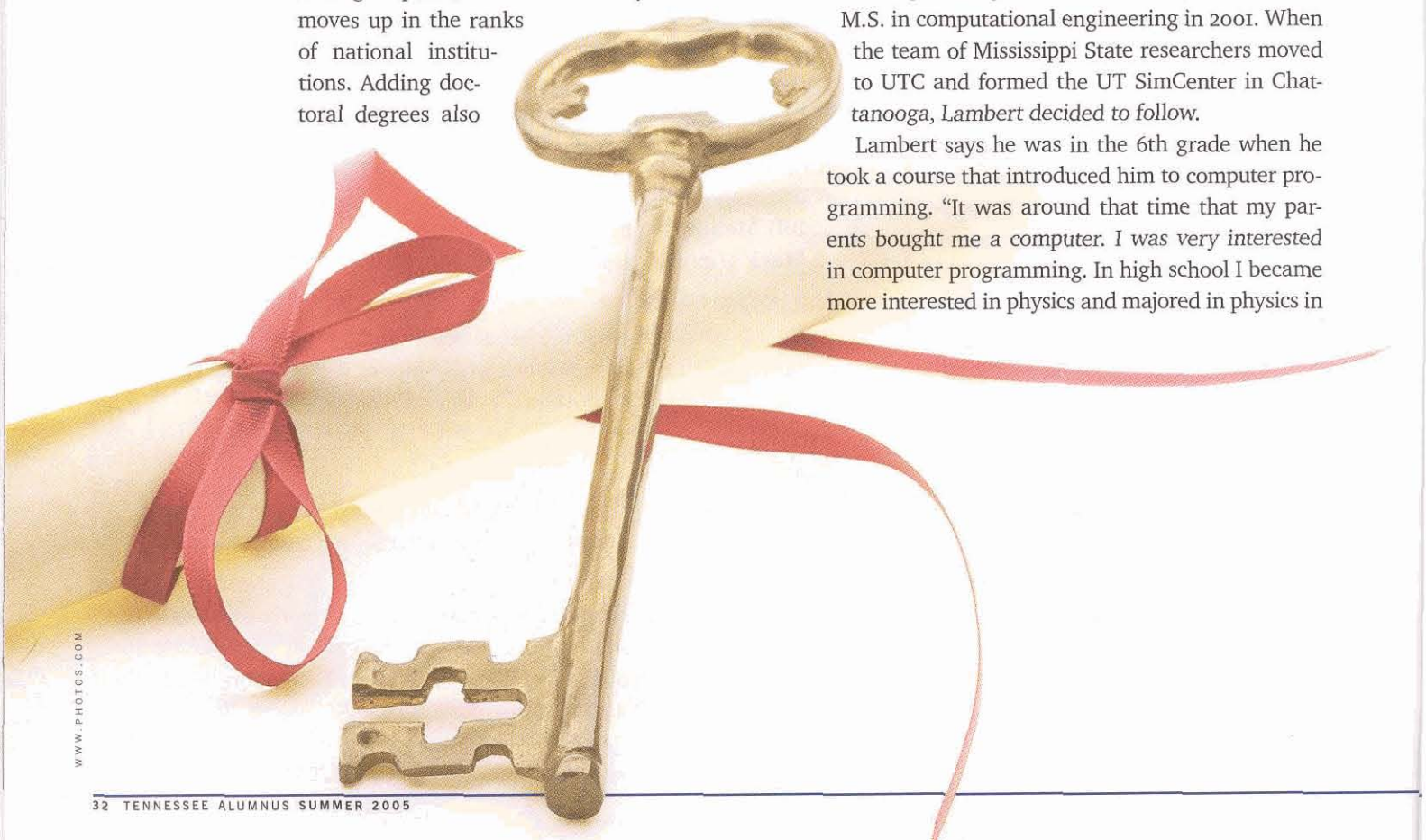
With the introduction of each of the three doctoral degrees, UT Chattanooga's standing rises among its peers, and the university moves up in the ranks of national institutions. Adding doctoral degrees also

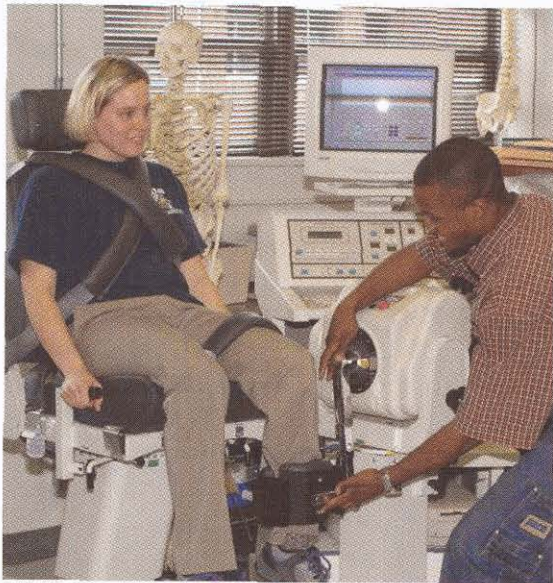
expands the university's commitment to the community. When UTC was created in 1969 by a merger of the University of Chattanooga, Chattanooga City College, and the University of Tennessee, the merger agreement said the new school would develop doctoral programs as soon as it was practical. The 35-year dream has become reality, upgrading the perception of the university in the region.

Chattanooga is an attractive place to study, and for Lambert, the SimCenter represented a particularly advantageous recruiting tool. "Students, especially those in science and engineering, like to see active research programs. The SimCenter represents a further increase in the research and educational opportunities available to students," he says.

Lambert began his graduate studies at Mississippi State University in fall 1998, after earning a B.S. in physics at the University of Northern Iowa. He worked as a graduate research assistant at the MSU Engineering Research Center and earned an M.S. in computational engineering in 2001. When the team of Mississippi State researchers moved to UTC and formed the UT SimCenter in Chattanooga, Lambert decided to follow.

Lambert says he was in the 6th grade when he took a course that introduced him to computer programming. "It was around that time that my parents bought me a computer. I was very interested in computer programming. In high school I became more interested in physics and majored in physics in





UT Chattanooga offers doctoral degrees in physical therapy.

college at the University of Northern Iowa," he says. "It was there that I took a course in computational physics and became interested in computer simulation as a tool for understanding the world around us. One of my professors suggested I investigate graduate programs in the field of computational science."

One of the members of the SimCenter team, Dr. Roger Briley, was a strong influence on Lambert's academic career. "Dr. Briley has been a tremendous source of guidance over the years," Lambert says, "and his moving to UTC was a big reason behind my decision to transfer as well. The research process inherently involves a lot of false starts and dead ends. When I was stuck, he helped me find my way out. His advice will serve me well in my career."

The foundation laid by Briley and the faculty of the SimCenter led Lambert to his new career with the computational fluid dynamics group at Boeing's St. Louis site, where he is an engineer-scientist. He is involved in computational analysis of fluid flow around aircraft. "The group also develops and supports many of the tools used in that analysis. My responsibilities include participating in both of those activities. Recently I have also begun to assist in administering our in-house computing systems," Lambert says.

Even without actively recruiting, the SimCenter has attracted high-caliber students like Lambert to study in Chattanooga. Lambert says the program has advantages for students, UTC, and the region. "The outstanding students the SimCenter helps bring to Chattanooga may be attractive as potential employees for companies looking to locate or expand in the Chattanooga area," he says.

Job Market Good for D.P.T. Grads

UTC's Doctor of Physical Therapy graduates say the job market is good in their specialty. Graduates have been recruited to work in adult and pediatric acute-care hospitals and rehabilitation centers, outpatient orthopedic clinics, private practices, school settings, and wellness centers.



D.P.T. graduates also have been front and center at national physical therapy events. "Five graduates from the 2003 D.P.T. class were selected to present their senior research projects at the American Physical Therapy Association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C.," says Dr. Cathie Smith, acting head of physical therapy at UTC. Research projects conducted by seven graduates from the class of 2004 were presented at an APTA meeting in New Orleans last February.

Establishing a doctorate in the physical therapy program brings UTC in line with the vision of APTA that by 2020 all physical therapy education programs will prepare entry-level physical therapy clinicians at the doctoral level.

"With the physical therapy curriculum now being offered at the doctoral level, UTC is preparing practitioners for the changing healthcare environment of the 21st century," Smith says. The D.P.T. graduates of UTC join more than 300 other alumni of the physical therapy program.

Learning and Leadership Offers Alternative

Entering a doctoral program requires the resolve to dedicate at least 4 years to course work and writing a dissertation. So managers, business professionals, and educators already juggling careers and family life should find a refreshing alternative through UTC's Ed.D. in learning and leadership.

"The program is non-traditional in many senses of the word," says Dr. Gene Bartoo, Rouff Professor in the Graduate Studies Division of the College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies. "I think the more esoteric benefits include experimenting with newer ways of delivering education; engaging more closely with local agencies, including schools and their leadership cadres; increasing the attractiveness of UTC as a place to teach; and connecting UTC with the people who will grow the community."

A push from local leaders in Chattanooga helped establish the need for the new program. With support from the University of Chattanooga Foundation, three new faculty members were hired who will also work with students in the bachelor's and master's programs. All students will have access to new Lupton Library holdings funded by the foundation. "It allows us to get journal subscriptions—always a pricey commitment—that we need but didn't have, as well as to purchase books," Bartoo says.

Clerical and administrative support has been added to accommodate the unique scheduling and student-contact needs of the learning and leadership doctoral students.

As preparations continue for the doctoral candidates to embark on their new path of learning, faculty members are energized by the prospect of teaching at the doctoral level. The university's engagement in this educational effort also provides increased visibility with the potential to boost UTC's ranking among peer institutions.

The Ed.D., along with the Ph.D. in computational engineering and the D.P.T., are taking UT Chattanooga and the Chattanooga community a step further in community maturity—a maturity that benefits all. "I am a great believer in continuing education in the full sense of the phrase," Bartoo says.

"With a broadening of the institutional efforts comes a consequent broadening of awareness of the importance and advantages of continued learning."