

Gift to provide scholarship fund for women working toward information technology degree

By Jon Strunk
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The University of Toledo received a \$300,000 donation last week from the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, managed by Fifth Third Bank, to endow a scholarship fund to support women pursuing careers in information technology.

A partnership between the colleges of Business Administration and Engineering, the Schmidlapp Scholarship for Women in Information Technology will yield about \$15,000 annually in perpetuity to go toward the education of students pursuing the new bachelor of science and information technology degree, as well as to women enrolled in traditional information technology programs.

"Traditionally, information technology has been a field primarily populated by men. As IT becomes more and more central to the operations of businesses, we want to do our part to help provide incentives for women interested in the field," said Dr. Thomas Gutteridge, dean of the College of Business Administration.

"The generosity of Fifth Third and the Schmidlapp Foundation will help create a new generation of businesswomen with IT knowledge and experience," he said.

"The scholarship will alternate annually between business and engineering students, and will be a valuable tool to aggressively recruit women into this rapidly growing field," said Dr. Nagi Naganathan, dean of the College of Engineering.

"UT's bachelor of science and information technology degree program is one of only a handful of such programs in the nation," Naganathan said. "Our faculty have designed an innovative hybrid curriculum, in consultation with industries, which combines technology and business skill sets in a unique manner. This will prepare our students to be very successful in the workplace while working seamlessly in a continuum spanning information systems to computer science as well as at unique interfaces involving both."

The University's research indicates a strong interest among women in the information technology field, particularly among women with associate degrees in technology fields who wish to complete bachelor's degrees.

During the last two years, 21 percent of UT engineering undergraduate degrees and 11 percent of business undergraduate degrees were awarded to students graduating with these information technology majors. Only 10 percent of these graduates were women.



Posing for a photo after announcing the \$300,000 gift from the Charlotte Schmidlapp Fund were, from left, Dr. Thomas Gutteridge; Linda Ewing, vice president of community affairs at Fifth Third Bank; President Lloyd Jacobs; Barbara Tartaglia, principal gifts officer for the College of Business; Karen Fraker, senior vice president of marketing at Fifth Third Bank; and Dr. Nagi Naganathan.