



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS  
P. O. Box 830688 Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

## News Release

For immediate release News contact: Jon Senderling, UTD, (972) 883-2565, jsender@utdallas.edu

### **Magesh Panchanathan Becomes UTD's First 'Home-Grown' Chess Grandmaster**

RICHARDSON, Texas, (July 13, 2005) – Magesh Chandran Panchanathan, who shocked the chess world last December by upsetting the highest-rated player in the United States, Alexander Onischuk of The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and catapulting The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) to its second consecutive Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship, has become UTD's first "home-grown" chess grandmaster.

The 21-year-old junior computer science major from India achieved the lofty ranking of grandmaster earlier this month by tying for first place in the World Open in Philadelphia and, in the process, earning the third of the three "norms" required to achieve the highest ranking in chess except for world champion. Significantly, Panchanathan made all three of his norms while a student at UTD and a member of the university's champion chess team.

Panchanathan is expected to be formally recognized as a grandmaster by the world governing body of chess, FIDE (*Federation Internationale des Echecs*), when its members meet next month in Dresden, Germany. There are only 856 grandmasters in the entire world, 60 of them in the United States.

U. T. Dallas has had two chess grandmasters in the past – Yury Shulman of Belarus and Marcin Kaminski of Poland – but both had attained their grandmaster standing before they enrolled at UTD, and both have since earned degrees (in Shulman's case, multiple degrees) and graduated. A fourth grandmaster, 16-year-old Alejandro Ramirez of Costa Rica, was selected last spring as a member of the fifth class of Eugene McDermott Scholars and will be joining UTD as a physics major in the fall semester. Ironically, one of the players Panchanathan defeated in Philadelphia this month was Shulman. He played to a draw with Onischuk.

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Dr. Tim Redman, professor of literary studies in UTD's School of Arts & Humanities and founder and director of UTD's much-acclaimed chess program, was ecstatic over Panchanathan's accomplishment.

"One of our goals has been to have a UTD student become a grandmaster while he or she was here at the university," Redman said. "I don't know if any Western university has ever done that before. It's one thing to recruit a grandmaster to come to your school. It's something else entirely to recruit a student who becomes a grandmaster while going through our program. I couldn't be more proud."

Redman, who played on two University of Chicago championship teams in the 1970's and founded the chess program at UTD about nine years ago, said there were at least two other players on the UTD team -- Amon Simutowe, 22, of Zambia, a sophomore majoring in economics and finance; and Dmitry Schneider, 19, of New York, a sophomore business administration major -- who might attain grandmaster ranking within the next year. Redman praised the UTD chess coach, International Master Rade Milovanovic, for his work with Panchanathan and the other players on the team. He also credited Dr. Michael Coleman, associate provost and dean of undergraduate education, with helping to recruit Panchanathan.

"Officials in India, worried about a 'brain drain,' did not want to give him permission to come to study at UTD. Mike Coleman called them in India and convinced them to let Magesh come here. Without Dean Coleman's efforts, we wouldn't have Magesh," Redman said.

Panchanathan was a virtual unknown in the chess world until his stunning and overwhelming defeat of the 29-year-old Onischuk at the Pan-Am tournament six and a half months ago in Wichita, Kansas. Panchanathan's victory was all the more unexpected because he defeated the top-ranked player in the U.S. while playing the black pieces -- routinely a disadvantage, especially in the opening.. The Pan Am is the most prestigious college chess competition held each year in the Western Hemisphere. UTD has won or tied for the championship four of the past five years.

### **About UTD**

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor, enrolls more than 14,000 students. The school's freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu).