

**College of Engineering**

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**Gropp named Siebel Chair**

**Inventor of standard that is key to programming today's supercomputers**

Computer Science Professor William Gropp has been appointed the Thomas M. Siebel Chair in Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, one of only two such chairs in the United States. The chair is the result of a \$2 million gift from the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation.

Gropp, along with collaborators at Argonne National Laboratory, pioneered the design of the Message Passing Interface (MPI). This standard—and its software implementation, also developed by Gropp and company—is essential to the parallel processing at the heart of supercomputing today.

“There’s no better place than the University of Illinois to advance the revolution in computational science. You need people who understand computing, math, and the particular problem area you’re studying—whether its drugs interacting with our body or black holes interacting with each other. Illinois’ College of Engineering brings those people together, and they’re really ready to collaborate,” said Gropp.

“I’m lucky to be here, and it’s an honor to be Illinois’ first Thomas M. Siebel Chair in Computer Science.”

MPI allows large-scale computations to be run on thousand to millions of processor cores simultaneously and for the results of those computations to be efficiently shared as the overall computing job progresses.

“MPI is the glue that integrates thousands of parallel computing tasks. Scientific computing as we know it simply wouldn’t exist without Bill Gropp and MPI,” said Rob A. Rutenbar, head of the computer science department at Illinois. “Companies wouldn’t be designing airplanes or automobiles in the same way. Climate change wouldn’t be understood to the degree it is. Drug design would look very different. You name it.”

Gropp is an accomplished scholar, having published more than 250 journal articles, books, chapters, and conference papers that have been cited more than 21,000 times. A key part of the management team for Illinois’ Blue Waters supercomputer, which is one of the world’s most powerful, Gropp joined the University of Illinois in 2007.

He’s also a great teacher. “Bill understands just how high our students should be aiming when they’re among the world’s best. He opens his door to young undergraduates and Ph.D. students alike, teaches them what they need to know, and connects them to state of the art research experiences,” Rutenbar said. (For an example of these experiences, see <link:

<http://www.ncsa.illinois.edu/News/Stories/GreenGPU/> “Illinois wins greenest self-built cluster.”</link>)

“Illinois’ computer science program is remarkable—one of the top five in the world—and Bill Gropp has distinguished himself there. I’m very pleased to see someone of his stature help lead the way at Illinois, and it’s my pleasure to help support his success and the success of the program,” said Thomas Siebel.

Thomas M. Siebel serves on the College of Engineering’s Board of Visitors and has served as a director of the University of Illinois Foundation.

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