

# Architecture, engineering students team up

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STAFF WRITER

TORONTO—Structural engineer Morden Yolles admits he was a mite anxious when he launched a design competition last fall, designed to inspire collaboration between architecture and civil engineering students at the University of Toronto.

"We were really concerned whether anyone would enter," says the founder of the firm now known as the Yolles Group Inc. and the winner of the 1997 Toronto Arts Award for architecture and design.

As it turned out, seven cross-disci-

plinary teams entered the competition, sponsored by Yolles, the faculty of architecture, landscape and design, and the faculty of applied science and engineering.

The competition is thought to be the first of its kind in Canada. Winners were announced this week.

The winning design came from the team of architecture students Carolina Chan and Michelle Au and engineering student Alex Cheng.

Second prize went to architecture students Gene Ascenzi and James Sheffield and engineering student Anya-Lilsa Bobert.

The winning team received a \$6,000-prize, while the second-place winners were given \$2,000. Funding came from Yolles.

The teams collaborated on designs for a real project, a community centre currently in the planning stages at the city of Toronto's Department of Parks and Recreation.

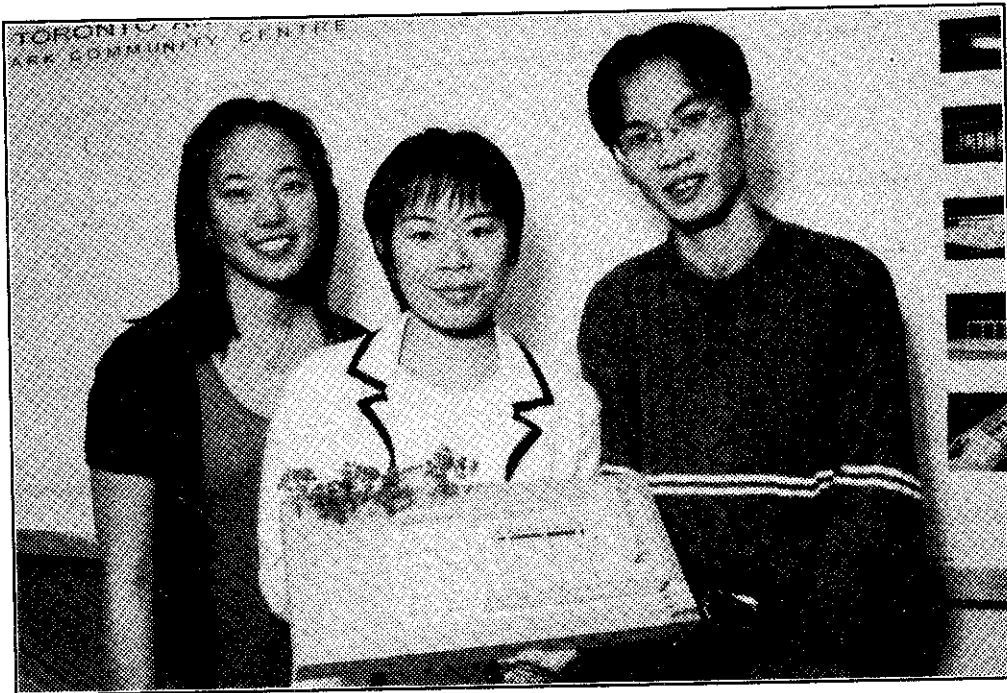
The students' designs will not actually be built, but organizers said the competition gave students a sense of what they likely would encounter working on this type of project in real life.

Students produced detailed architectural and engineering designs—including structural design and load calculations—along with comprehensive reports.

→ WINNERS, Page A5

University of Toronto architecture students Carolina Chan (at left) and Michelle Au (centre) and engineering student Alex Cheng show off their award-winning design in a student competition at the university.

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ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE  
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# Winners made compromises

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hensive architectural drawings and a scale model. The winners, who hope to work for architectural and engineering firms after graduating, found collaborating with each other both fun and eye-opening.

"It was quite interesting," said Cheng. "After four years of (engineering) studies, I hadn't worked with any architecture students before."

The three spent many hours reviewing various options before settling on a final design.

"It was a reality check sometimes," said Chan.

"We would come up with a design and it wouldn't work structurally. Or a lot of the structural things we wouldn't like architecturally. There were a lot of compromises."

The competition was judged by a panel that included Yolles, associate engineering professor John Bonacci, assistant architecture professor John McMinn and architect

Blanche van Ginkel.

The students got design guidance from architect Julian Jacobs and from engineer Eric Gordon of the Yolles Group.

Yolles was inspired to launch the competition by the conviction that the design of the built environment suffers from an endemic lack of collaboration between the two professions.

He claims never to have heard the word architecture throughout his engineering training at the university. He graduated in 1948.

Those involved in the competition were all pleased with the results.

"What surprises and pleases me is the degree of integration (of architecture and engineering) in the projects," said Larry Richards, dean of the faculty of architecture, landscape and design.

"I certainly hope we can continue this kind of interaction between our students (in future)."