On Christmas Eve 2003, the Academic Computing & Information Services (ACIS) held its annual year-end bash. Eager staff who turned up punctually were waved away by organisers who were still frantically getting ready. As staff came in, they were treated to a running slide show of photos of ACIS staff taken at various functions / teambuilding sessions, etc. held over the year. Following the slide show, Mr William Chew (Centre for User Support, CUS), organised a couple of ice-breaker games. The second one especially involved quite a bit of running around, so staff got in some exercise! Divisional Director, A/P Philip Wong then gave a short address and presented appreciation awards to selected staff in recognition of their hard work throughout the year. Deputy Divisional Director, Mr Tan Hoon Chiang cut a cake to mark the occasion, and then the games commenced!

Staff members were divided into various groups comprising colleagues from the different departments. As the party was part of ACIS teambuilding efforts, some elements of teambuilding were incorporated into the games. Groups were tasked with various challenges which required teamwork and creativity as well as some knowledge of colleagues’ hobbies and the campus layout. The top three groups came away with well-deserved prizes.

This was followed by a lucky draw which saw some staff staggering happily home with some really large prizes (e.g. a tower fan). And that was not all! After the lucky draw came the gift exchange. As all staff had brought a gift for this part of the programme, each one was ensured of a gift. Finally, before proceeding to the buffet lunch, staff members were each given a door gift.

At the end of the party, staff members were all smiles (especially those who had won prizes). It was definitely an enjoyable way of ending the year!

In view of the growing importance of good customer service (both to internal and external customers), Centre for User Support embarked on a 2-day service excellence training retreat which was conducted on 9 and 11 December 2003 at the Orchid Country Club and Downtown East respectively.

On the first day we had an interesting time identifying each other’s behavioural styles, strengths and weaknesses and learning some tips on how to relate to and handle customers with different behavioural styles. The self-discovery learning was great!

The energy level went up further on day two. We learnt about understanding customers’ needs and the importance of body language and the right choice of words when attending to them. Lots of fun and laughter was generated from the role-plays, experiential learning exercises, group discussion and sharing - some of the staff even shared their personal experiences in handling challenging situations and people.

The event was also graced with an opening speech by DD/ACIS, A/P Philip Wong and a closing address by DDD/ACIS, Mr Tan Hoon Chiang.

It was truly two days of learning and sharing in a fun way. The overall programme rating was a high 91% and it was no wonder that staff were smiling all the way!