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## UIC News Release

University of Illinois at Chicago Office of Public Affairs (MC 288)  
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<b>Release Date:</b>	<b>May 4, 2004</b>
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### UIC Computer Scientist Wins NSF Grant for Bioinformatics Study

Bhaskar DasGupta, an assistant professor of computer science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has been awarded a five-year, \$400,000 Career grant from the National Science Foundation to use specialized mathematical techniques in computational biology, a research area that is concerned with the use of computer science to help discover, analyze and manage biological information.

DasGupta will use what's called combinatorial and geometric optimization techniques to design efficient algorithms for use in several important research areas in bioinformatics.

The proposed research work may lead to better computer software that will allow biological researchers and bioengineers to combine data and do quicker and more complete analyses in fields such as genome sequencing and studies of biological sequences and structures to help recognize remote, evolutionary relationships.

"A broad goal is to design novel combinatorial techniques that can be applied to more than just one problem at a time," said DasGupta. "Another goal is to appropriately formalize the problem so that instead of looking at several problems, you can look at just one but get a solution that can apply to all. That saves time and is conceptually more elegant."

DasGupta's work will build on his previous research and collaborative work with other computer scientists who are looking for ways to make computers expedite the search for links and common threads of information that can help in accurately diagnosing disease and identifying previously unknown pathogens in a sample.

A native of Calcutta, India, DasGupta earned his bachelor of engineering degree in computer science from Jadavpur University. He earned additional degrees in computer science, including a master of engineering degree from the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, a master of science degree from Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

DasGupta came to UIC in 2001 after teaching at Rutgers University at the Camden, N.J. campus.

The Faculty Early Career Development award is the National Science Foundation's most prestigious honor. It is awarded to junior faculty members in the sciences and engineering who demonstrate a commitment to research and education. DasGupta is the eighth member of UIC's department of computer science in the College of Engineering to receive an NSF Career award.

DasGupta's outside interests include travel and sightseeing, especially by car, exploring new restaurants and music. He's played the sitar and Hawaiian guitar, which he played regularly from the time of his mid-teens through his undergraduate years. "I learned it on my own," he said, but admitted with a laugh, "I can't say that I

was very good."

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