By: Warren Zhang
For the past fourteen years, the last Saturday in April has meant one thing for the normally drowsy University of Maryland campus – Maryland Day, a campus-wide festival showing off the various programs, majors and people at the University of Maryland.

According to Gene Ferrick, director of the College of Computer, Math and Natural Sciences, Maryland Day started out as an extension of the long running Agriculture Day. Part of this year’s theme, Ferrick noted, revolves around this year being the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, which established land grant universities like the University of Maryland.

The theme, however, is tricky to integrate into science and technology exhibitions. Instead, Maryland Day’s scientific events will proceed as usual, despite the Science & Engineering Festival planned for the same day on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. “We looked at it and said, ‘Well, what are we going to do? Are we going to send people down there?’” Ferrick said. “And the administration said, ‘No. we’re doing Maryland Day.”

The events slated for the day include a mix of new and old displays. Ferrick said that the events repeated from year to year are the most popular events. “Like the insect petting zoo or the Physics is Phun crowd, where they make ice cream using liquid nitrogen,” he said. “They’re just things that draw families.”

However, Ferrick doesn’t feel the need to repeat every popular Maryland Day event. “We have enough events that I don’t need to push anyone,” he said. Conversely, less popular Maryland Day activities are usually not repeated. “One of our faculty members back in the early days of Maryland Days was giving a talk about the science behind X-Files,” he said. “It was a great talk but not a lot of people showed up.”

One of the secrets to success for Maryland Day, as noted by Ferrick, is to have the