Like many students, Bradley Kappes is quick to point out the value of having a laptop computer. The senior who grew up on a farm near Borup, Minn., knows the importance of the right tools for the job. “Students gain a great deal by using the computer every day,” Kappes explains. “We graduate with skills we wouldn’t have without this constant exposure.”

Kappes, an accounting and agricultural business double major, knows that the computer will be a part of any future career he might have.

Associate Professor Lyle Westrom recognizes the skills that Kappes has. “It doesn’t matter what I ask Bradley to do, I can depend on him to come through for me,” Westrom says. “I am also in awe of his computer skills and the way he can make the technology work. It has proven beneficial time and again.”

His computer skills served Kappes well as president of the Parliamentary Team which competed through Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA), the national professional agriculture education organization. The competition held in Indianapolis, Ind., in October 2009, includes contests in debate, essay writing, as well as parliamentary procedure.

Melanie Meyer, ’09, secretary for the team, took first place in the contest. “The contest is pretty intense,” explains Kappes. “Five teams are on stage at one time. One team presides and the other four act as an assembly. You don’t know what is going to take place and Melanie had to take notes efficiently. At the end of the competition, she had one minute to do final touches on the notes she took and hand them in for judging.”

Kappes served as second-student vice president for ATA, he was selected by Westrom who served as second vice president for the organization. “I was a part of agricultural education for a semester,” Kappes said. “I wanted to see if it was a good fit for me, and I was honored to be chosen by Lyle as second student vice president. It was a great experience.”

A member of Collegiate FFA on the Crookston campus, Kappes serves as the group’s current president. “I enjoyed FFA in high school, competed in Ag and Natural Resources Activities Day on this campus, and am excited to be a part of the only campus in Minnesota to have a Collegiate FFA program.”

He also works at the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) as a student project accountant for 20 hours a week and is president of Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) First Year Honor Society, participates in Ag Arama, and competes in North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Judging Conference.

“My background and experience in agriculture and my interest in accounting are blended nicely in my double major,” Kappes states. “I came here because I found the major I wanted and because of my scholarships and experience on the campus with Ag and Natural Resources Day.

“I feel a personal connection to faculty and staff, and I enjoy the interaction with classmates. It is an easy place to get to know people and to make friends. I found exactly what I wanted at the U of M, Crookston, and I never looked anywhere else.”