The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Department
Of
Computer
Science.

Minutes   Meeting of Industrial Liaison Board

Date: 14 May 2008

Present: Jon Barker, Mandy Chessell (chair), Phil Green, Mike Holcombe, Monika Kus
               (minutes), Phil McMinn, Chris Thomson.

1. Welcome and apologies

Mandy Chessell welcomed the committee.

2. Minutes of last meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a fair and accurate record.

3. Head of Department presentation on the Department

Phil Green reported that the two ongoing matters discussed in the last year's meeting: securing Phil
McMinn's post and establishing epiGenesys, have now been resolved. He thanked the members for
their support.

He informed the committee that the RAE exercise had finished and we were awaiting results.

4. Genesys presentation

Mike Holcombe outlined the principles of the new company – epiGenesys which has become a
legally independent unit which reports to the DTI, has a board of directors and the director of SUEL
as its head. The principal business of epiGenesys is to provide software solutions to the University
departments and to support research activities, and in the future commercial software development.
Some charity work is also being undertaken.

The company employs two permanent staff members and part time students together with Genesys
students working on epiGenesys projects. In the future, we hope to pay the students near
commercial rates rather than the bonuses they currently receive. This would be attractive to
students who currently pay high tuition fees. Students from other departments may also work in
Genesys and their skills might be useful in marketing, customer relations or financial planning.

Genesys recent projects include:

§ The Chronicles of Froissart – an interactive DVD game based on 100 years war in medieval France to be played at the Royal Armouries.

§ CF Kids - website including advice on diet and medication for children with Cystic Fibrosis, developed in close collaboration with medical researchers and doctors.

§ Sheffield Now – a social networking site located in the virtual city of Sheffield.

§ Iceberg Tracking – an application developed for researchers in geography which helps to identify icebergs.

§ Bluetooth project – an application which uses mobile phones in meetings or lectures to gather instantaneous responses.

§ On line training software – a training package for Safety Services on how to dispose of hazardous waste. This was very well received and is going to be marketed to other universities.

In addition to Genesys, students are involved in commercial projects through Software Hut. This module is taken by all second year students who work in teams and deliver software for external clients. There is a prize funded by IBM for best overall project.

At this point Mike Holcombe outlined the principles of the Sheffield Graduate Award which is available to students who demonstrate a range of skills and competencies valuable to future employers. Students have to prove their extensive involvement in activities including course representation, business competitions and student mentoring

5. Enterprise Computing

Phil McMinn reported the progress made in recruitment for the Enterprise Computing course. In 2007/08 eight students were recruited out of the target ten. In 2008/09, out of 58 applicants, 17 put Sheffield as their first choice. We already have one deferred application for 2009/10.

The success of the recruitment is likely to be due to a big poster campaign and mail shot, and possibly the high entry requirements of AAB which attract high quality students.

6. General discussion

Mandy Chessell has agreed to continue her involvement in providing training and guidance to our students. This could include courses on team working and software design.

It was pointed out that students tend not to turn up for various extra curricular lectures and the latest MS talk was particularly poorly attended. It was suggested that guest speakers could give lectures forming part of an Enterprise Computing module.

It appears that students engaged well with the Mainframe Computing trial version used for the 4th year research topic. This is expected to run again and it will appear in one of the Enterprise Computing modules.

Specific Enterprise Computing Year 3 projects are being trialled now, in preparation for EC students coming into their 3rd year. The Computer Science and Finance and Computer Science and Business courses are being abolished in favour of Enterprise Computing.

So far projects offered by Deutsche Bank were a success and more commercial challenges are needed. Any offers of projects in business related matters, marketing or finance coming from the ILB members would be very welcome.

The ILB needs more people on the committee; Mike Holcombe will contact our current members and Phil McMinn e skills in an attempt to generate membership.

7. Any other business and wrap-up

The board met briefly after lunch and agreed that the winner of the poster competition this year was Glen Mailer for "A Guess-free Sudoku Solver".