

UGA-MIS Industry Advisory Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2004

The UGA-MIS Industry Advisory Board met at 1.00 pm on April 12th, 2004 in 314 Sanford Hall for an afternoon session. In attendance were:

- Jeff Bell, BellSouth
- Ron Swift, Teradata
- Ann Purr, LOMA
- Rick Gordon, Deercreek Consulting
- John Marzullo and Tony Creasy, UPS
- Trina Hill, IBM
- Todd Porter, H. T. Prof Executive Search
- Scott Stevenson, E*Trade Financial
- Steve Follin, Deloitte Consulting
- David Chevalier, World Leadership Group
- Navendu Charu, Federal Express
- Billy Taylor, State Farm Insurance
- Alan Najjar, BrightLane
- Ken Schernekau, Cerner
- Jon Bridges, Chick Fil-A
- Jane Griffin, BearingPoint
- Phil Kilgore, Lithonia Lightning
- Amanda Reeves, Russ Johnson, Doug Black and Sean Pruett, KPMG
- Brad Hunt, University of Georgia
- Student representatives from SMIS
- Faculty of the MIS Department.

Afternoon session: welcome, introduction and comments

Hugh Watson welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the agenda for the day. He said that the Master of Internet Technology project presentations in the morning were excellent. He announced that the Board meeting would cover fewer topics than previous years but go into greater depth. The major topics for discussion would be:

- What technologies should we be teaching in our classes, and how quickly can this take place?
- What is the future of MIT program?
- New possibilities for the Advisory board.

Introductions around the room were made and the contents of the package materials provided to everyone were reviewed. Dale Goodhue, the head of the MIS Department, talked about the role of the MIS Advisory Board in providing a link to the business community. He recognized the role of Hugh Watson, who conceived the board and has coordinated it over the last 19 years.

Dean George Benson discussed the importance of the MIS Department in the Terry College of Business. He also talked about the serious budget cuts in Terry over the last few years and the new opportunities that the programs in Atlanta and Gwinnett present: the Executive MBA program in Buckhead; the Evening MBA program in Gwinnett, and the “Terry 3rd Thursdays” in Buckhead. The new 25000 sq. ft. facility in Buckhead, scheduled to open Sept 1, 2004, will house all Terry educational activities. This is also supported by increased marketing efforts, especially for the Executive MBA program in an attempt to reach other markets and provide financial help for both the new facility and the Athens campus.

In response to a question about student enrollment, Dean George Benson stated that the demand for a Terry education has grown, but that the budget has stayed the same, which prevents the college from taking more students. The demand for Finance, Marketing, and International Business is currently especially high. He also noted that the quality of students has increased dramatically.

What technologies should we teach now and in the future?

Bob Bostrom discussed the role of the Information Technology Vision committee founded in the MIS Department in the Fall 2003. Its charge is to develop an IT vision and architecture for the MIS department and to set detailed outcomes for core courses. He reviewed the MIS undergraduate curriculum, which currently includes 4 core courses (Programming, Data Management, Systems Analysis and Design, Web Development) and 3 electives. He also pointed out the main drivers for change: open standards, object-oriented focus, service-oriented architectures, (e.g., web services), focus on modeling business/workflow and system design and code generation-reversal, and focus on business processes/applications.

Discussion: Web Services

Bob Bostrom presented a web services architecture framework and discussed web services as a key integration technology. His research suggests that web services will be the norm by 2007. Bob discussed the advantages and challenges of web services for companies and their ability to offer an alternative programmable interface to business applications through the process of request, search, discovery and service execution.

Jane Griffin stated that web services fits with business process management and integration strategies. It resonates well with the CIOs she’s encountered, and although it can be overwhelming at first to businesses, it offers the potential for huge returns.

Doug Black agreed that the trend is toward web services and is applicable to several of his company’s Internet banking clients.

Tony Creasy and Jon Bridges believe that the idea of truly public directories will be the future.

Discussion: Course Feedback

- Web services course stack
 - Build – programming, web development, database
 - Description, messaging, network - web development, database, XML, telecom
 - Publication and discovery - web development, telecom
 - Business flow - system analysis and design , BPM (new course)

MIST 4600 – Computer Programming (old MIST 4630)

Currently this course focuses on .NET, but this will change so that the emphasis is on the J2EE environment. Additionally, there will be an increase in focus on object-oriented programming in general.

Jon Bridges wondered why the focus was being changed to Java technologies, but seemed pleased by the move, and Larry Madeo offered that it was felt that there was a slow but steady move to open-source technology. This shift, he said, changes the focus from a one platform/multiple languages environment (.NET) to a multiple platforms/one language environment (J2EE). Andy Seila also added that Java is more mature technology.

MIST 4610 – Data Management

Currently, this course only provides an introduction to XML. It was discussed that in the future the course will address not only XML, but also hierarchical databases, multi-dimensional databases, object-oriented databases, and the Java database interface. Board members agreed this was an appropriate direction for this course.

MIST 4620 – Systems Analysis and Design

The focus in this course is moving toward UML. According to Board members, coverage of UML should include the following: use cases; and class, sequence, and activity diagrams. The question was then posed as to whether or not data flow diagrams should still be covered in this course. Russ Johnson suggested that DFDs should remain in the curriculum. Jane Griffin echoed this sentiment, and added that UML should be used to encapsulate services. Tony Creasy noted, however, that his company is at 90 percent UML now and is moving away from the use of DFDs. Dale Goodhue suggested the possibility of using UML down to the object level, then shift to DFD within the object. The question was then posed as to whether instructors should teach the “tool” or focus more on how to hand-draw diagrams. When posed to the group, the conclusion was that there should be a mix between drawing and using some tool.

MIST 4630 – Web Application Development

The focus of this class will change from ASP.NET to Java technologies. There will be an emphasis on rapid development, as well as an increased coverage of web services. Jane Griffin stated that she sees WebSphere to be most common and state-of-the-art Java IDE.

A New Elective -- Business Process Management

This course will provide a business process management perspective. It will help students understand major business processes, inter-relationships, process/application integration, and the role of IS in all of this. An emphasis will be placed on modeling and the ability to build applications using web services. Overall the Board agrees with the direction of this course. Billy Taylor stated that the ability for students to articulate is key and there should be a focus on understanding the user. Ron Swift said that he has concerns that this turn into a “tool course,” and the focus should be more on business process management. He suggested that the course shouldn’t necessarily get hung up on the Internet, or on using tools, or developing an application, but rather be a business course. Amanda Reeves agreed that this would be a good course and added that it should expose students to regulatory issues such as Sarbanes-Oxley. Jane Griffin agreed that the course shouldn’t be all about the technology, but should also focus on articulation. Ron Swift thinks this will be a great course to enhance communication and presentation skills. Trina Hill added that there should be some focus on change management.

MIST 5640 – Network Management

The focus of this course will shift from a technical to a managerial perspective. There will be additions to the current course content in terms of security, web services, portals, and e-collaboration. This will be a high-level course. Jon Bridges discussed the importance of covering security. The Board agreed this is a good direction for this course.

MIST 5670 – Managing Information Systems

This course focuses on information resource management. The MIS Department is considering making this a required course for all MIS majors. The question was posed to the Board as to how much project management should be incorporated into this course. Trina Hill suggested that project management is very important, regardless of a person’s role in a given project, and that all students should understand and have at least an overview of the project management process. Jane Griffin suggested the focus be placed on the architecture of a project, putting all the components together – network, databases, web services, etc – and how they all connect with each other. She stated that an IS manager should learn to be an “orchestra leader” and not a “task master.” Rick Gordon wondered if the purpose of this class was to tie IS together or was it a project management course. Bob Bostrom responded that it is primarily a way to provide a project management perspective, but also to give an appreciation of IS all the way up to the CIO level. Dave Chatterjee, who teaches the graduate-level equivalent of this course, stated that project management is being taught as a module of the course so that students

understand how IS fit into the “big picture.” Additionally, he covers the role of IS leadership. Rick Gordon suggested that organization management be incorporated somewhere in the MIS curriculum. Dale Goodhue offered that the MIS track is limited to 7 courses, and that there was even a move to drop it down to 5 (which has been fended off). Rick Gordon then suggested that project management could possibly be incorporated into each course. Ron Swift wondered if it would be possible to offer an online or summer project management course. He also noted that the morning MIT presentations focused primarily on project management issues, not what they accomplished. Alan Najjar emphasized that articulating business issues is key. Steve Folin suggested that students learn what it takes to be an effective IT practitioner, regardless of their role within an organization, and should be familiar with common terms and concepts, such as “scope creep.” Additionally, he stated that students should understand that they won’t be getting well-defined assignments in the real world. Doug Black suggested that the class should tie everything together as it is their last class, and should focus on how IS fits into the entire business. Dave Chatterjee added that students need to be able to see the big picture, and have exposure to IS failures and successes. Navendu Charu suggested incorporating role playing as well into the course.

Other questions/feedback on other electives

Russ Johnson suggested an increased emphasis on ERP, and that this should be part of a required course, not just covered in an elective class (MIST 5670). Phil Kilgore wondered where the infrastructure people come from. He stated that his latest hires are DBAs, etc., and that his company is shifting from hiring developers to hiring infrastructure people. Dale Goodhue offered that they can’t give sufficient training for infrastructure, but can provide strong background. Phil suggested that there is a missing layer between Computer Science and MIS. Ken Schernekau said that his company hires MIS graduates and brings them in as Systems Engineers for 2 years. Jane Griffin thought it would be great if MIS could have multiple (e.g., application development, data management, infrastructure).

Introduction and comments from SMIS officers

The SMIS president discussed the purpose and mission of the organization: To further develop the relations between students, as well as between students and faculty. She briefly described the busy and exciting year the organization is having, doubling its membership base and hosting a wide variety of guest-speakers events as a part of the new “Distinguished Speaker Program”.

Discussion: The future of the Master of Internet Technology Program

Andy Seila and Dale Goodhue discussed the future of the MIT program at Terry and the advances and challenges it is facing. Due to budgetary restraints, the full time MIT program was temporarily discontinued last August and will be replaced by a part time program at Gwinnett. Andy described the full-time program as an “unqualified success, not a failure,” since it had better placement than the MBA program in the last 3 years and

attracted employers with its formula of being strong on the technology, project management, and business strategy. Dale Goodhue described the new part time program at Gwinnett as a self-supported, open-source, multi-platform program, scheduled to launch in the Fall semester of 2004, with evening courses for a period of 5 semesters. A discussion was initiated with the Board about the launching time and the competitiveness of the new program with the Master of Information Systems program at Georgia State University, as well as the class size it should target. Board members expressed concerns about the short preparation time for launching of the program, which is still awaiting official approval. They also challenged its financial opportunities to self-fund with the proposed class size of 30 people and the frequency of courses offered (starting every other year). They expressed the opinion that since the program is closer to the Metro Atlanta area and is geared towards working professionals, the class size should be maximized and the courses should be offered more frequently to make it more flexible for the enrolled students. Hugh Watson and Andy Seila agreed with the general notion that there is a good market out there for the program and that the class size and frequency should be maximized. Hugh noted that if demand exists, classes could start every 12 months, or even more often, and the size of the class could go up to 36-38 people. The reasoning behind these numbers, as explained by Andy, is based on the Gwinnett facility classroom size restrictions, the availability of facility for teaching the classes, and also the tuition required to meet breakeven point (at 30 people in class with an in-state tuition of \$449 per credit hour x 6 hours per semester). The fall semester is commonly considered to be a good starting time for the program since this will only require one Summer Semester to be included. As for the competitiveness of the program, as discussed also by Hugh and Dale, the excellent quality of faculty, the better control over the class size, and the unique portfolio approach will definitely create advantage over competitors. The discussion was wrapped up by Dr. Andy, who talked about student motivation and the experimental projects included in the program. He also raised the question whether whether some focus areas should be developed (e.g., financial services, health care, non-profit, etc.)

Discussion: The creation of a UGA-MIS Advisory Board Steering Committee

Hugh Watson initiated an unstructured discussion of how to strengthen the UGA-MIS MIS Industry Advisory Board. With a series of questions to the Board members, Hugh raised the issue of lost momentum between Board meetings. He suggested establishing a Steering Committee that would discuss and work on specific issues, such as recruiting additional members to the Board. Hugh also proposed developing a web-based integrated database of all current and past MIS students. The Board members responded favorably to Hugh's proposal to have a half-day meeting in the Fall in Atlanta with members of a Steering Committee. It was suggested to have a dinner meeting, possibly at the new facility in Atlanta. Ron Swift suggested that the best time for the meeting would be in the end of October. Hugh circulated a sign-up sheet of people who would be interested in serving on the Steering Committee. As for additional ideas for the MIS Department, Jane Griffin suggested the creation of seminars or courses in the new facility in Atlanta.

Closing comments

Hugh Watson closed the meeting with a discussion of how to gain additional exposure for MIS@Terry and how to expand membership on the Advisory Board. He thanked all the Board members for attending the event and invited everybody to the Banquet at Holliday Inn and adjourned the meeting.

Banquet activities

The Board members and faculty joined 80 undergraduate MIS, MIT, and MBA students for a social hour and dinner at the Holiday Inn. Jane Griffin gave the after dinner talk. Dale Goodhue awarded Eighteen scholarships were given to students by The MIS Alumni Association, Atlanta SIM Chapter and the Center for Information Systems Leadership. A scholarship was given in honor of Pat McKeown. Thanks to everyone who provided scholarships.