

## **Notes from the Advisory Board Committee Meeting, October 18, 2005**

The UGA-MIS Industry Advisory Board Meeting was held for the first time in the fall, in Atlanta, in the Terry College's Executive Education Center.

The meeting had an excellent turnout of Board members, faculty, invited guests, and members of the MIS Alumni Association.

The meeting started with a social hour, followed by a dinner. Hugh Watson welcomed people to the event, followed by Dale Goodhue who provided an update on items of interest in the MIS Department.

The MIS program continues to be ranked in the top twenty programs in the country by *US News & World Report*, with a 16th ranking this year. Dale reported on the joint undergraduate Accounting/MIS course that is being offered for the first time. It is designed to provide students with education in internal controls, in response to industry's need for expertise in this area. He also said that a course on business process management (BPM) will be offered for the first time this spring in the part time MBA program in Gwinnett. Dale also reported a slight uptick in the number of students choosing MIS as a major, but the numbers are still down from several years ago.

Two items were discussed in depth in the meeting – the undergraduate MIS curriculum and the Master of Internet Technology (MIT) program.

Bob Bostrom led the discussion of the undergraduate MIS program. He described the current curriculum and some of the changes that are being considered. One change is to require a course on business process management (BPM). Not only is BPM important today, most of the work is unlikely to be outsourced. There was strong support for requiring BPM in the undergraduate MIS curriculum. It was also noted that a BPM course should be available to all students in the Terry College of Business. Also, some material on BPM might be introduced into MIST 2090, the Introduction to Information Systems course that is required of all Terry students.

One of the possible sequencing of MIS courses would have no programming in the first semester (students would take BPM and Database). The observation was made that this might hurt students who plan to intern. The ability to program is important to some internship opportunities.

Board members asked where in the program infrastructure and security are covered. They are covered in several courses but more thought is needed to ensure that they receive as much attention as they deserve.

The need for project management was also discussed. It is currently covered in several courses (Systems Analysis and Design and Information Resource Management) but more coverage might be included in the program. The comment was made that it might be handled through online courses and materials.

The question was asked whether the MIS program is designed to produce developers or business analysts. Our target market is for future developers. This is challenging because the structure of the majors in the Terry College only allows seven courses to be required. We need to be careful in our curriculum to be focused on our target market. Offering a certificate or minor might serve the business analyst role.

Andy Seila led the discussion of the MIT program. The program is being offered for the first time as a part-time program in Gwinnett. The first class started this fall with 33 highly qualified students. All seems to be going well with the program under Andy's leadership.

Starting a new group of students each fall creates staffing problems. One suggestion was to take a team approach and pair MIS faculty members with Adjuncts (at least the first time through.) There was a discussion of how to identify, monitor, and manage the Adjuncts to ensure quality. Subsequent to the Board meeting, we have learned that Adjuncts must be approved by the Board of Regents (BOR). So, if we are going to use Adjuncts to teach courses, we need to identify them early enough to get BOR approval. Adjuncts normally should have a PhD degree. For some subjects such as J2EE development and the user interface and usability course, this could be difficult. Adjuncts without a PhD degree can be approved based upon their work experience, but they need to be justified

The MIT program requires the development of a system for a company. A team of students takes on an actual project, and the company pays \$5,000 for the completed work. One issue is how to frame and market the project to companies. One suggestion was to market the project as way to "intern" a bunch of students, and get to know them and their strengths. In this way, an organization gets to interact with many students, sees the quality of their work, and has a project carried out, all for very little money. It was also suggested that we should negotiate harder with organizations about the rights to publicize the projects that are completed, and even have joint ownership of the project deliverables. Another idea was to team up with the Marketing Department in the Terry College of Business to market the project opportunity to companies.

There was also a discussion of how to promote the program to students. In addition to the current approaches (website, billboards, etc.), the program might be marketed to UGA alums who are 5 years out. We could also do search advertising on Yahoo or Google.

The meeting closed with a drawing for Terry tee shirts and tickets to the Georgia-Arkansas game. It was announced that the spring Board meeting will be held in Athens on April 12. Mark it on your calendar.

Hugh