

Central Texas College
Computer Science Department
Advisory Council Meeting 2011

2 December 2011

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Barbara Carver, Senior Programmer, Bell County.
Elliot Germany, President, Panel Specialist Inc.
Dale Koebnick, Metroplex Hospital MIS Director, (V-President, Advisory Council)
Angela Mars, Central Texas College, Coordinator, IT Education & Training
Abdul Subhani, Managing Partner, Centex Technologies
Laurie Zimmerman, First National Bank Texas, Vice President (President, Advisory Council)
Mark Zimmerman, Bell County, Sr System Analyst
June Farmer, Senior Software Engineer, McLane Company Inc.
Maria Kelley, Program Analyst, Intergraph Public Safety

FACULTY ATTENDING

Robert Grazinski
David Coleman
Doug Edwards
Dennis Ford
Tanya Gibson
Mike Green
Katherine Oser
Jane Perschbach
Steve Schroeder
Laszlo Eosze (acting recorder)

MEMBERS MISSING

Rodney Hess, Bell County, Senior Programmer.
David Roberts, CIS Coordinator, Texas A&M Central Texas
Steve Sanders, IT Specialist, US Army Information Center Fort Hood Tx.

I. WELCOME

The advisory council meeting was called to order by Laurie Zimmerman at 9:15 a.m. She welcomed all members and then turned the floor over to Mr. Grazinski.

II NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Grazinski thanked all for the many years of regular counsel and support. He then presented these changes that were made or are planned:

- We “upgraded” to Blackboard 9.1, which seems a step down from Blackboard 8.x .
- We are now using Windows 7, Office 2010, Visual Studio 2010, Project Server 2010
- We also use Virtual Box to teach multiple operating systems.
- We enhanced the MCITP program by adding an optional course on Client Operating systems (ITNW1408). The program as first created, did not include any courses focusing on client systems.
- We intend to switch and adjust two Security courses: ITSY1400 “Fundamentals of Info Security” will replace ITSY2400 “Operating Systems Security” in all programs.
- In the Security Management Degree IMED 2409 will replace ITSY2400 as ITSY1400 is already required in that degree.
- Opened the floor for specific and general comments as follows:

III COMMENTS

A. Since our student make-up has changed so much over the years, and students tend to drop the harder classes as soon as they learn the homework required, what is the **most important personal trait** that a new employee needs?

Mr. Germany’s answer: There is not any single trait, but a blend of many: they need to be like a chameleon. Ethics are important (cuts down expenses from fraud, waste, and abuse), moral values, vision, they must be timely, communicators, and have other job-dependent skills; they must be well-rounded because they don’t know where they will end up working. There is no “perfect package”.

Mr. Green doubted ethics could be taught after a child is ten, nor in the classroom.

Ms. Gibson related her story of an email from China stating her student purchased a term paper from them, but did not pay for it.

Ms. Koebnick is looking for the right mix of personality and attitude. Her IT needs to emphasize customer service. Some job candidates are easy to weed out (dressed inappropriately, no resume), while some star applicants turn out to have hidden criminal records. But above all, applicants must be able to work well with others, so she has her staff also meet with applicants during the interview process.

Mr. Subhani agreed that we can't really teach ethics in the classroom, and some of his candidates come with nearly blank resumes (AAS and 2 years with Chick-Fil-A), but they display a drive to obtain the information, by displaying they know how to run an online search. Ethics is required in all IT fields.

Ms. Mars addressed dependability: if corrected, will they change? Will they follow through with promised work? Will they adhere to the due dates? We need someone who is both a Team Player and Independent but in every case must be willing to work within the parameters established and finish an assignment on time..

Ms. Carver also focused on "reliability". There are those who interview perfectly, yet are extremely negative, or unwilling to accept responsibility (blame). That is why they rely on a probationary period. And this is why Ms. Koebnick has her staff interview and work with applicants during the probationary period.

Mr. Grazinski mentioned that most of our classes now have team projects, and instructors deduct for tardiness, and that psychological evaluations are entering the workplace hiring process.

Dr. Perschbach has had her students do a Myers-Briggs assessment for forming her teams. She also saw that putting solid students into the groups allowed for modeling of ethics in the small group, and improved the group's learning.

Mr. Subhani allowed that most applicants are not perfect, but that the employer needs to differentiate (and assess) whether the applicant is willing/unwilling and able/unable to do something. We “teach” skills, and “coach” behavior: If employee is willing but unable, then teach; if unwilling but able, then coach; if unwilling and unable, then fire.

Mr. Coleman used to randomly group students into teams, but tried a new concept to avoid having the few good members do all of the work on a team: group students by grades (A students with A students, B with B, etc.). It seems the poor performing students often do very well – possibly because they have to, since no one else will do all the work.

Ms. Zimmerman likes to preach the creed that “you will never be jobless if you exceed the boss’s expectations”, if you can “figure it out” rather than begging for help you will be successful.

B. What are the most important technical innovations in 2011 or on the horizon that our students will need to understand to be successful in the IT Industry?

Ms. Zimmerman said she saw a marked change in how people spent their money: the former leader Wal-Mart is now behind video and iPhones/iPads. New IT workers must be familiar with Kindle, Droid, and Apps. How they work (iOS) and how to program for these devices

Ms. Koebnick addressed her problems with cellphones with cameras in the medical work place – ethics and confidentiality above all. We all need to adapt to the changed dynamics in the workplace (she saw a working waiter texting in his pocket). Requiring students to be on time for classes is great as it emphasizes punctuality and dependability, but only works if consistently enforced by every instructor. But the biggest change is how technology is now controlling her world: e-medical records and even IVs will no longer work if the network dies – or even crawls, as happened when a large attachment was emailed to many in the system. The

emergency room must continue to provide services even if there are networking problems.

She is also opposed to blogs taking the place of personal, telephone, or email communication.

Ms. Mars discovered the need for including personal device use in CTC's computer use policy.

Mr. Ford added that phones are no longer for talking, but are computers and used for everything

Ms. Koebnick emphasized the need for and enforcement of those rules. In the hospital, the pieces of paper (clipboards?) were easy to put down somewhere while taking blood pressure bedside, but the iPads are not so easily stored (the Computers-On-Wheels are cumbersome, but are here to stay).

Mr. Germany spoke of the new items that cause the most problems: Social Media, Apps, Cloud Computing, SAS (Software as a Service), and Virtual Machines.

Mr. Ford mentioned that MDM and BYOD are now valid acronyms: 'Mobile Device Management' and 'Bring Your Own Device'.

Mr. Subhani recommended we teach Mobile Computing and Security, since those have a projected need. Creating an App has also great value, since sales are now on a global scale. The question has changed in IT from "how can I connect these two PCs" to "what can I do with this new phone [device]?"

C. What is the importance of a resume: are they accepted at face value or are interviews competency based?

Ms. Zimmerman said that HR screens applicants and resumes, but the applicant must also demonstrate or explain details about some items listed on their resume..

Ms. Mars said that her section has written tests covering all the needed skill sets.

Mr. Germany was looking for emphasis on technical expertise that is extremely related to the job: Network skills are not important when applying for a web page job. Be very careful on resume not to overstate skills, because that will make a difference between being fired for lying, or being offered specific training.

The other important item is the applicant's presence on social media: Obviously, embarrassing pictures on Facebook are bad, but so are divergent statements on Linked-in and other media. Since this information is available to the public an employer may find inconsistencies between the resume and information on a social media site that causes the applicant to not gain employment

Mr. Subhani also looked for information beyond titles: what exactly was entailed in that job? This is a good time to demonstrate drive ("worked at Chick-Fil-A while completing B.A. in three years" is a very good statement from a young applicant). It demonstrates the drive and dependability of the individual.

D. What can we do to better prepare our students for the workplace?

Ms. Koebnick (supported by others) said we should keep doing what we are doing. The technology is changing a lot, but it is now people-driven (the users). It is very difficult in academia to stay current. The CTC Computer Science Department has always tried to stay current as demonstrated by the software updates accomplished in 2011.

Mr. Subhani suggested we continue to adopt newer technologies and, above all, incorporate hands-on training where ever possible as this is the best way to learn; by doing. A web designer, for example, needs to know more than just code: they need to know where the files reside, how to upload them, etc.

Ms. Carver said they went to Model View Controller system instead of HTML and had a very intense learning curve: they scheduled a 5-day C# class, and other required training. New employees are trained before they are assigned projects while they are on probation, to assess their potential.

Mr. Edwards agreed that this was the new “just-in-time training” and “application of references” that our students should learn to handle. Applicants must know how to find answers using current search technologies (‘Google is our best friend’).

Ms. Koebnick fully concurs with the importance of knowing how to search to find the answers to problems. The workplace always has multiple, simultaneous, overlapping projects. She does not want to hear “I don’t know”, but wants IT workers who can figure things out, who know where and how to find a valid solution on their own.

Mr. Grazinski stated that one of the things we try to teach our students is to first isolate a problem, then Google to find a solution and then fix the problem.

Ms. Mars explained a change in use of her Helpdesk and Desktop Technicians: she now rotates them to build confidence and provide more hands-on training to her Help Desk people, while teaching the Desktop technicians more about how to speak over the phone, and how to deal with irate customers.

Mr. Grazinski then thanked the council members for their comments and support, and turned the meeting over to Ms. Zimmerman.

Ms. Zimmerman echoed Mr. Grazinski’s appreciation and wished everyone a productive holiday season.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.
