COMPUTER SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2009
12:00 p.m. Room 407

Those in attendance:

<u>College Faculty and Staff</u>

Tom Ashby	Kathy Cupp	Tm Green	Al Heitkamper	
Haifeng Ji	Sara Mathew	Anita Philipp	Mary Williams	Gary Dominguez

Suzanne Victoria – IT Coordinator, Chesapeake Energy
Chad Hoffman – Sr. Applications Developer/Analyst, Chesapeake Energy
Tom Purvis – Development Manager/Webmaster, MidFirst Bank
Bobby Johnson – Sr. Programmer/Analyst, MidFirst Bank
Tony Young – Field Tech Support, OU Health Sciences
Christ Hyde – Data Management Coordinator, OK Dept. of Corrections
Jon Sacker – Web Developer/Programmer, Oklahoma County MIS
Mike Griffey – L-3 Communications
Matthew Reynolds – IT Student, OSU
Hobi Haque – Software Developer, FAA/OCCC Adjunct

Professor Cupp opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending. She briefly mentioned the growing need for workers in Information Technology, especially in programming positions. She then introduced Suzanne Victoria to talk about her work as a programmer for Chesapeake.

Ms. Victoria explained that she is the technical lead of two teams of programmers and developers that write internal applications for Chesapeake to use in analyzing their production data. She mentioned how overwhelmed she felt in college when she thought about the future and having to find a "real" job. She touched on four points she felt are important for students to remember while pursuing a degree and/or their career.

The first point was how important it is for students to remember not to fear change because they will miss the opportunities that change may bring. The second was to fail early and fail often. She said this gives students the opportunity to learn from a number of small mistakes that can still be corrected, rather than having one large failure at the end that cannot be fixed. Her third point was to learn how to learn. She said that the technology will change so often that the things you learn initially will become obsolete, so it is vital to be able to learn skills that will allow you to constantly adapt and adjust what you know to the changes in technology. The last point was to learn to work in teams. She said that knowing how to work with others and learn from them in a group setting will allow for more productivity and efficiency than any one individual will ever be able to achieve no matter how much technical knowledge they may have.

Professor Cupp agreed that team work is critical to success because students, especially, tend to achieve more when they have that additional support and motivation. She then introduced Tom Purvis from MidFirst Bank.

Mr. Purvis explained that he is responsible for maintaining the Intranet set up at MidFirst Bank. He mentioned how Intranets have totally changed the way programmers write programs at the bank. Rather

than creating an application and placing it on each desktop, they can now create the application and place it on an Intranet server and within minutes hundreds of employees can have access to it.

He also mentioned how important programming has become as our society becomes more technologically inclined, citing that even refrigerators and other household appliances now require some amount of programming to make them functional. He talked about the value of knowing at least one programming language really well because the basics are typically the same for the others. He said that if an individual has a firm, working knowledge of one language, then other languages can be easily learned on the job.

He stated that if a student wanted a job in IT at a company that is not a "computer company" then it helps their chances of getting hired if they know about the business as a whole, not just what they need out of the technology. For example, if someone wanted a job at MidFirst Bank and they had financial experience, they would go at the top of his list because they already know the inner workings of the business and the terminology they will be using as programmers, etc. This means students should begin planning internships or part-time jobs that may help their career in the long-run.

Jon Sacker stated that his job was more in-line with what Mr. Purvis talked about with using intranets. He said he writes intranet applications that end up on external sites for people to check their property assessment for Oklahoma County. He said he uses specifically .Net Framework C# and so if someone wanted to get into intranet kind of work, they would want to take classes on .Net and C#.

Mike Griffey mentioned that working with computers means you are not locked down with any one thing. He said if a student is interested in the medical field, they can write code for medical purposes, and if they lose interest in that then they can start writing code for something else. He pressed the point that there is a need for someone in computers in most every company these days.

Chris Hyde told everyone that he got his B.A. in MIS from OSU and got a job at the Oklahoma Department of Corrections where he has done everything from networking offices to systems analysis and more. He said they started pushing some web accessibility standards and everything went .Net, so he came to OCCC to get the additional training he would need for that. While he was here, he also learned a lot about Web Development and CSS, Flash, and Visual Basic which he was immediately able to apply to his current job and earn a raise. He said the best thing for students to do is to network and to diversify themselves. He said there are a lot of groups here in the city such as Oracle User Groups and OKCPro.Net.

Hobi Haque agreed that networking is very important. He pushed that as one of his most valuable skills, explaining that you meet people everywhere and you will learn so many new things if you just talk to people and discover what interests you share. He said that he got into this field because he felt a job in computers had good job security because as long as you know what you are doing and can solve problems, you will always be able to find a job. He said what he learned from school was mostly discipline. He learned how to be somewhere on time, how to meet deadlines, how to respect others and work with people. He also mentioned that the reason he has his job at the FAA was because he once held an internship there as a student. He said that after he graduated from UCO and applied to the FAA, they saw that he had worked there before and already knew the culture of the FAA.

Chad Hoffman said it is important for students to realize that even if they think they have no interest in computers there could still be classes or even a career field in computers that relates to what they are interested in. He cited artists as an example, saying they sometimes come into computers to do design or build graphics and develop websites around their material.

Tony Young talked about how he does more desktop support than anything. He said it is good for people who want to get out and really deal with people and help solve their immediate problems. He mentioned he had taken a few web classes at OCCC and it turned out that those classes later helped him get a position as a Web Developer despite the fact that he was really only working in desktop support and probably did not have as much web development experience as some of the other people he worked with.

Matthew Reynolds said that he got into Information Security because he wanted to learn how to legally hack into a computer. He emphasized how marketable a degree in IT is and will continue to be since every company, regardless of their field, will have information and data and will require a way to store it, secure it, process it, etc.,

Bobby Johnson said that there are a lot of fun things you can do with programming that people may not know about, such as creating applications for your friends on Facebook or the iPhone. He said Microsoft has a lot of tools online that are very scaled down versions of what the professionals use but he said students could try their hand at creating small applications with these programs.

Professor Cupp thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.