

Education Board Conference Call Notes, 9/15/05

Agenda:

1. Status of Education Chapter of Job Migration Task Force Report
2. Status of Education Board Annual Report
3. Status of Overview Volume
4. European organizing
5. Short reports:
 - a. Ontology Project
 - b. Education Council Planning
 - c. Progress of responses to enrollment crisis

Participants:

Eric Roberts, Andrew McGettrick, Boots Cassell, Rich LeBlanc, John Impagliazzo, Russ Shackelford, Peter Denning, John Gorgone, Don Bailes, Corky Cartright, John White, Lillian Israel, Kati Lovasz

1. Job Migration Task Force

Board members are very concerned about the the current version of the Education Chapter of the Job Migration Task Force Report, especially since the Education Board wants to be able to support the entire report and in particular the Education Chapter. At this time the chapter reflects Steve Andriole's more business-oriented views, which are particularly critical of CS education. Bill Aspray is looking for a set of reviewers for this chapter that will take into account both academic, technical, and industry viewpoints and create more of a balance. Eric, Andrew and Russ are all reviewing this chapter. Eric would look at the possibility of allowing any Ed Board member access to the chapter.

Reviews are due by late September.

The full report from the Task Force is due out on November 1st (Dave Patterson wants the report completed in a timely manner). John White indicated that he was lining up reviewers as well from outside the Education Board – from the industry, in India as well as some deeply technical corporate folks from Microsoft, Google, IBM, etc. Eric will be getting feedback from John Hennessy who can offer both academic and industry perspectives.

Peter mentioned that he spoke with Moshe Vardi, Co-Chair of the Task Force, about the Education Board's feelings about the chapter. They agreed that all of ACM's support is needed behind the report. Bill Aspray, Moshe Vardi and Frank Mayadas, the other Task Force Co-Chair, will decide what goes into this chapter. One possibility is that the report will be released in November without the Education Chapter if it appears that this section cannot be pulled together in time. The Board, and ACM, have a real opportunity of making this chapter impactful and important – much needs to be said about the state and challenges of computing education around the world.

2. Annual Report

Due to the time taken up with providing feedback on the Education Chapter of the JMTEF, Eric asked the Executive Committee for a reprieve on the annual report – **the report will be sent to ACM shortly.**

3. Overview Volume

It is important to get the Overview Volume out as soon as possible prior to the release of the JMTEF report. Certain parts (non-contentious!!) of the present content of the Education Chapter comes from this volume. The feedback process is moving forward – Bob Sloan, Rich and Andrew are co-ordinating a response to Gerry Engle’s concerns and this response will be posted on the website shortly (along with all other responses to feedback received). **Russ indicated that some more editing is needed and then the volume will likely be ready for publication by the end of September. The Overview Volume should be on the agenda for the upcoming Education Council meeting in New York in late October.**

4. European organizing

Andrew, Russ and Gordon recently attended the September 2nd - 3rd meeting in London of individuals representing computing education from across Europe. The meeting was very successful, and a report on it will be distributed in the next few days. Board members learned about the state of CS education in Europe and the impact of the Bologna Declaration. It appears that in no small part as a result of Bologna, there is a growing community the members of which share the same concerns about CS higher education as the ACM.

Participants at the London meeting agreed unanimously that a European-based and European-focused conference on educational issues in computing should be created. The theme for an initial meeting to achieve this could be the Bologna Declaration. A strongly held view at the London meeting was that there would be great benefit if such an initiative was instigated by and supported by the Heads of Computing in Europe. The initial meeting in Zurich (which will be similar to the CRA Snowbird meeting) in October would seem to offer an important forum and important opportunity to launch such an initiative. Accordingly, the ‘London group’ would request the opportunity to have this possibility considered, and ideally agreed upon.

The London meeting also yielded some surprising discoveries, among them that some European representatives held an entirely different view about job migration than is generally held in the US. Some European countries (really Germany, Austria and Switzerland) do not feel the loss of IT jobs in the same way as the US, and though there might be downturns in CS students, there is often a (partially) compensating upturn in IT students. IT job migration from certain parts of Western Europe also usually only occurs in the direction of Eastern Europe. Job migration to India may only be possible for English-speaking populations and does not, therefore, pose the same problems for Europe’s non-English speaking IT professionals. In turn, the challenge for Asian IT centers might be the support of languages other than English.

John Gorgone raised the question of whether ACM could create curricular support document that pertains specifically to Europe, as there is currently a lack of curricular guidelines when it comes to Bologna issues. While this has merit, the view of the 'London Group' was that there could be benefit in producing a descriptive status report of CS higher education and IT professions across Bologna nations, to be followed by a prescriptive document later on. However, the first step was looking at the conference possibility. ACM should carefully consider how deeply to get involved in the creation of this second document so as not to appear to be promoting American-based higher education in Europe.

Short reports:

a. Ontology Project

Project wiki is set up: <http://what.csc.villanova.edu/twiki/bin/view/Main/OntologyProject>
A meeting had just taken place in Las Vegas and progress had been made. Next steps are to seek appropriate data structures to represent project outcome and interact with curricular development.

b. Education Council

Rules and regulations of Council have been reviewed; Eric indicated that the Education Council's mission will probably mean changes to the Education Board's charter. This should be considered at the Board's upcoming on-site meeting.

c. Enrollment crisis – computing careers

Moshe Vardi's question about the career paths for individuals with a CS degree is important. Having a job and skills map would go a long way to answering this question; it is the Professions Board's task to work on this kind of map.