BCIT UPDATE

ACCESS AWARENESS DAY IS COMING!

If you've ever wondered what it's like at BCIT for students with disabilities, here's your chance to find out.

ACCESS AWARENESS DAY is a special program of activities designed to encourage administrators, faculty, staff and students to become more aware of the skills and abilities of challenged students.

ACCESS AWARENESS DAY is an important day in the history of BCIT and everyone on campus is invited to participate. Some of the activities planned during the noon break include a Technical Fair in the SAC, a performance by "Spinal Chord" and a wheelchair basketball game.

ENHANCING ACCESS ON CAMPUS: What BCIT is Doing

The Library at BCIT will acquire two new access enhancing features in the near future. Many of you have probably noticed that a ramp is currently being constructed which will allow direct access to the building. This will provide some relief, we hope, for those folks who made their way to the Library by a very circuitous route in the past.

Completion date for the new ramp is the end of February and official opening ceremonies are planned for April 3rd during **ACCESS AWARENESS DAY.**

The second new acquisition is an Oscar — a computer-driven reader and voice synthesizer which literally turns print into voice. Books, articles and notes can be placed on the scanner and Oscar reads the page. Students can also utilize various software packages on the p.c. and have their input read back to them.

Recent advances in technical aides have revolutionized access to post secondary education for print impaired individuals. Although most textbooks are taped for students who are blind or who have learning disabilities, much course material is from handouts or books from the Library. Oscar will allow print impaired students to study independently without having to rely on another person to read to them.

Oscar will be housed in the Library and wil be on display during **ACCESS AWARENESS DAY,** April 3, 1991.

Joe Casimir, retiring associate dean of Electronics Technology, receives an engraved plaque from Ken Kajiwara at a surprise appreciation evening held recently at the False Creek Yacht Club. Colleagues and friends gathered to thank Joe for the leadership and guidance he has provided to the department over the last four and a half years. Joe and his wife were lured to the Club for a quiet drink by a couple of friends, but on arrival found themselves in the midst of over seventy colleagues and friends! A Chinese and East Indian supper was later enjoyed by all, after which several gifts were presented to Joe. Joe is returning to faculty in the Electronics Department.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE OF A LIFETIME!

It was the professional development leave of a lifetime! A chance to work on one of the greatest engineering projects in history . . . the linking of Britain to the continent via a 29.6 mile tunnel under the sea.

Two years ago, BCIT instructor Mike Boyle decided he wanted to be involved in the Channel Tunnel project in some capacity and wrote to several British engineering companies in the hope that he could be taken on as a contract consultant. One company responded by saying that if he paid his own airfare to Britain they would give him an interview. That interview ultimately led to employment with Mott Macdonald, the second largest engineering consulting company in Britain.

Hired as a senior contracts engineer to help in the management of the tunnel's design, Mike started work at the company's head office in Croydon in the spring of 1988.

"It was a stimulating, fast paced kind of life; like nothing I'd ever been involved in before." I carried out negotiations with the British contractors responsible for building the tunnel and worked with Mott Macdonald staff on budgeting, scheduling, etc."

Mike spent most of his time working in Croydon, only rarely visiting the tunnel site at Shakespeare Cliff in Dover.

cont. over . . .

Mike Boyle

"Access was restricted because of high security, but from the cliff you could see the scale of the project. At the base of the cliff a huge landbase has been created from the fill being taken out of the tunnel. Access to the tunnel is through an adit which looks just like a small hole in the base of the cliff. The tunnel at this point is about 35 metres below sea level." (Imagine standing on top of a ten storey office building and looking at the ground below and you'll get an idea of how far that is).

At its deepest the tunnel is about 120 metres below sea level.

Over 5000 people have been involved in the construction of the tunnel but there are usually only ten to 20 people actually involved with the tunnel boring machines at the tunnel face.

Mike, as senior civil engineer, spent a year involved in design management and another year on part of the Channel Tunnel rail link — the controversial part through central London and the Kent countryside.

"We had to prepare detailed engineering studies of the routing which went 50k south through London to Swanley. The job was extremely interesting. I was working with everyone, from civil engineers to the general public and politicians. The public groups were opposed to the possible noise, vibration and construction problems in the London part of the rail link and about the loss of countryside in the Kent section so there was a lot of press interest."

Although the eight month study was never actually implemented (costs were thought too prohibitive), Mike says he was not disappointed. "It is not uncommon to have studies of this type postponed or cancelled. The experience I gained from all the consultation more than made up for it."

Since returning to Canada in February last year, Mike has largely lost touch with the project that dominated his life for two years, although he knows that financial backing for the privately funded project has run into difficulties. When it started, six months behind schedule in 1988, the price tag on the tunnel was $11 billion. According to Mike, that amount is now closer to $15 billion.

Mike, a professional engineer with 20 years experience in civil engineering, ranging from tailings dams to highways, says the tunnel experience has given him a whole new level of expertise in . . . you guessed it . . . the technology of tunnelling. He has used the experience in teaching construction planning to BCIT Civil and Structural students and more recently in his work as acting program head of Transystems, a small department within the School of Engineering Technology responsible for delivering 90 correspondence courses in civil technology (relating to highway survey, design and construction) to private/public sector customers across Canada. Mike joined BCIT in 1985.

STAFF REPORT

Ever wonder why something at BCIT is done the way it is? Ever wonder about a policy or procedure being the way it is? Ever feel there was a particular problem with something and you didn't know who you should ask or tell? Wonder no more. Whatever may be bothering you or has aroused your curiosity about BCIT, now is your opportunity to get the answer from the President.

In each issue of Update, we will feature "ASK THE PRESIDENT!", so that whatever your question, all you have to do is fill out the form below, and you will receive a prompt reply. Once your question has been reviewed by the President, he will respond or it will be directed to an appropriate member of the administration or faculty for response and then published in Update. If you prefer, it will remain confidential and the response will be directed to you personally.

ASK THE PRESIDENT!

Date _____

Dear President Watson, I would like to know _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Check appropriate box.)

☐ I want the response published in Update and my name to be withheld.

☐ I want the response published in Update and you may use my name.

☐ I do not wish the response to be published. Please send it to me personally and in confidence.

Name _____

Campus Location _____   Local _____

For verification purposes only, you must provide your name in responding.

SEND TO: ASK THE PRESIDENT!, President's Office, Administration Building

SIMS Designed by YOU

A regular column provided by the SIMS team to keep the campus updated on the new Student Information Management System.

DIARY OF PROGRESS

January and early February: A number of support staff, faculty and administrators have been involved in JADS — and acronym for Joint Application Design.

JAD is a technique for rapidly developing the requirements and design for information systems. It addresses a key problem in systems development: the lack of effective communication between information systems professionals and the ultimate users of a system.

Through focused two and three day workshops, key users and management personnel specify their operational and informational requirements. A skilled facilitator guides the process, prompting and focusing comments. A record of requirements identified by the users serves as the foundation from which the systems professionals describe the comprehensive new system.

This method of collecting essential information achieves a superior result in a shorter time than the traditional interview and analysis approach. The users participate throughout, imparting a sense of responsibility and understanding for the system they help design.

Although not completely without crises (the first session was interrupted by a lengthy fire drill and renovation to the adjacent block wall), the JADS went very well. SIMS project leader and senior analyst with Computer Resources, Murray Smith, reports: "the results of the JADS have surpassed my expectations . . . I am very pleased."

Rae Higuchi, School of Trades Training, says: " . . . the facilitator was excellent . . . he took unclear . . . ramblings and translated them into clear, concise statements."

Marsh Heinekey — "I felt my solutions to existing problems . . . were put forward . . . I would like to see more JAD-styled forums to address issues at BCIT."

Other comments about the sessions include: "Effective, productive process". "Could have wide applications within BCIT." "Very well run!" "Some participants did not attend throughout the session . . . this was disappointing." "Very productive . . . provided an opportunity for various department representatives to brainstorm and problem solve." "Seemed to make others aware of the inflexibility of the current systems . . . "

February and March

JADS are complete. Notes taken during the sessions were distributed to participants for comment and then compiled into a comprehensive requirements document. This will be reviewed during four JAD sessions on March 1 and 5.

Considerable time has been spent developing the DATA MODEL which describes and graphically depicts the business data that needs to be used in the SIMS project. This includes "entities" such as person, course, and program and their relationships.

Process models are also being devised which graphically depict how people and departments use the data. In addition, issues have been identified. The resolution of these could have an impact on the ultimate requirement description. The SIMS Steering Committee will assume the task of seeking resolution to outstanding issues.

By the end of March, a Request for Proposals will be written which will specify the technical and functional requirements of BCIT with respect to student information. It will be distributed to vendors of post-secondary administrative software who will attempt to match the features of their systems with our requirements.
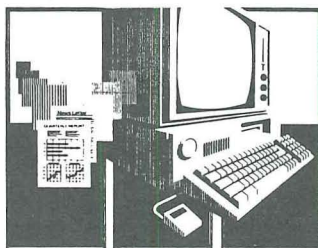
The Future

The next phase of SIMS will involve evaluation of the proposed products, selection of a systems solution (including hardware and software), recommendation of a solution, a cost estimate for customization, and an implementation plan.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE STAFF PARTICIPATE IN SIMS BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS
by Andy Scott

On behalf of the SIMS project team I would like to thank the Registrar's Office staff for participating in the SIMS brainstorming sessions on November 27, 29 and 30. The brainstorming sessions were set up to collect information on what they are currently doing and what could be done to make their tasks easier and improve the level of service to faculty and students. The areas considered were: application processing and registration; program and course file management; course credit and equivalency; communications with applicants, students, prospects, mailing lists and student records.

A tremendous amount of information was collected and many great ideas came out of the sessions. The following is a summary of the results:

The new system should have:
- Accurate, comprehensive, consistent and timely information
- Standard terminology
- Easy access to ONE source of information
- Student online enquiry to program and course offerings
- Automatic checking of requisites, requirements and eligibility
- Automatic transcript, flyer, letter and publication generation.

The system should also eliminate manual-intensive processes. A central service desk to handle all walk in requests (one stop shopping) should be created.

This and other information will be used as input in determining the requirements of the new system.

Information submitted by
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