

CenterPoint

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CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP / INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Setting the Compass

**CDTL uses road
mapping to chart
its future course**

see page 2

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Close Connections

When Jennifer Grant constructs the list of supporters for her professional life—in a way, her own personal board of directors—she includes Mike Wold, an individual who would likely appear on many such lists.

Wold and his partner Jesse Freese developed and taught the project management class in the Master of Science in Software Engineering (MSSE) degree program. Since the program's debut in 1997, the class has generated its share of fans. For many students, Wold's patience, encouragement, and expertise made a lasting mark.

"He and Jesse really know project management," says Grant, web consultant for Wells Fargo Bank, Minnesota. "I gained a full understanding of the project management life cycle from the class. I don't know that I would be as successful without Mike and Jesse's class."

Wold introduced Grant to the Project Management Institute, and she became involved in local activities within the software project management community. She knows that she can contact

Wold with questions. "He's one of those people you can count on."

The software engineering program founders agree. Before the program began, they asked Wold and Freese for their suggestions in shaping it. Wold and Freese decided to take their involvement a step further by developing and teaching the project management course.

"I basically had the good fortune to be on the ground floor with the program and the honor to work with excellent teachers and support personnel," says Wold. With 25 years of experience in project management, much of it in the growing area of software engineering, he had plenty to offer the program and his students.

Wold spent part of his career at Lockheed Martin, where his last and most challenging assignment was to manage the group that developed

and installed virtually all the civilian terminal air traffic control systems in the United States. He also led the group to improve its software development and technical management processes at Lockheed.

Most recently, he joined Fissure, which Freese helped found, as a trainer and consultant. Fissure promotes organizational growth for the companies that it serves by improving the project management skills of professionals. Its state-of-the-art simulations provide an excellent vehicle for hands-on learning.

The MSSE program also plays an important role in helping professionals make greater contributions to their companies, he says. The human and financial toll for projects that aren't managed well can be quite high.

"We think there is a lot of money that is wasted in the organization





Jennifer Grant, web consultant for Wells Fargo Bank, Minnesota, and Mike Wold, who co-taught the MSSE project management course

because it's so easy for software management processes to spin out of control," he says.

Wold and Freese make that point come alive in their class through the use of several teaching tools. The class has a heavy emphasis on class discussions, where both the instructors and the students share their insights. In addition, through a computer-based simulation students see the impact of their decisions. They also work in teams to manage a software project, learn from case studies, and meet guest lecturers who add their own real-life examples.

"Mike and Jesse did a very good job presenting the material in a way that we could easily digest it," says Zeeshan Tariq, IT manager for Medtronic. "It was very valuable because what we were learning, I used on a day-to-day

basis. We also had fun while learning, and I think that's most important."

In the 2004-2005 school year, Wold will step down from his co-teaching duties and help Freese and a new co-instructor, John Skovbroten, during the transition. He may appear as a guest speaker, and his connection to the students in the program, such as Grant and Tariq, will continue. Wold has enjoyed the time that he has spent with the talented professionals in the program and likes to hear about the successes of the students whom he has taught and mentored.

"I enjoy working with students like those in the software project management class because they really want to learn," he says. "Seeing what students accomplish is a very satisfying part of my involvement with the program."

Changes

In July 2004, the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) will assume full responsibility for the Master of Science in Software Engineering (MSSE) program.

In 1997, CSE and the Center for the Development of Technological Leadership (CDTL) launched the MSSE program as a way to meet a growing industry need for advanced training in software engineering. The partnership between CDTL, with its expertise in developing programs for Minnesota's high-tech industry, and CSE, with the strength of its faculty, contributed to the program's success.

CSE recently established the University of Minnesota Software Engineering Center (UMSEC). Moving the MSSE program to UMSEC will align it more closely with department research and outreach initiatives, says Pen Yew, CSE head.

CDTL is expanding its research and consulting program in technological management and leadership and will continue to serve as a bridge between the University and the high-tech community by developing innovative responses to industry needs (*see story on page 2*).

"We have enjoyed our role in administering the MSSE program," says Massoud Amin, CDTL director. "The students and alumni are outstanding. It has been our pleasure to serve them, and we look forward to other collaborations in the future with them and CSE."

Both CSE and CDTL are working to make the transition a smooth one. The UMSEC also will be responsible for the MSSE alumni program.

For additional details about the transition, visit <http://www.users.itlabs.umn.edu/classes/msse/dgs/index.html>.

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