TO: Potential Senior Project Clients

FROM: Professor Bob Buckley, Senior Project Coordinator
Department of Computer Science
School of Engineering and Computer Science
California State University, Sacramento

DATE: Spring Semester 2017

SUBJECT: Senior Project Proposals

The senior project requirement is intended to provide our majors with experience in the development of a software application for a public or private sector client. The students work in relatively small teams over the course of two semesters. The work requires not only team collaboration but also close collaboration with their project client in order to ensure the software delivered provides the value that the client expects.

Upon completion of the project and the course, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the discipline and practice necessary to successfully develop and deliver a software product.

In order to provide our senior project teams with an introduction to potential clients and a general understanding of the scope of work required, we request that you provide a proposal that should, at a minimum, include the following:

1. A brief description of the client’s “business”
2. A brief description of the value the client expects to derive from the project
3. A general description of the features\(^1\) to be provided by the software
4. Contact information: name, phone number and email address

If the scope of work required seems appropriate, I will provide the teams with this information. The teams are then responsible for contacting the client to arrange for a meeting. The decision to initiate the project should be a mutually agreed upon commitment.

THE PROJECT. The minimum scope and complexity of a typical project should be equivalent to what would be required for the team to understand and apply the technology necessary to implement a Web-based service application, including the design and implementation of a database. Such a system would also require a number of features involving user interaction; designed and implemented using a Web interface. While this characterizes most of the projects

\(^{1}\) A feature would represent a task the user would need to accomplish. For a student at a university, registering for classes for the coming semester would be an example of a feature. Quite a bit of functionality would be required to implement such a feature.
undertaken by senior project teams, other types of projects of similar or greater complexity may be acceptable. If you are not sure whether your project is acceptable, please go ahead and submit the proposal. I will review it and get back to you immediately.

Throughout the project, the team is expected to meet regularly with their client. We have strong evidence to suggest that effective collaboration between the client and the team is essential in ensuring project success. During the first semester the team will work with the client to elicit a clear understanding of the required features, the expected types of users of each feature, and what each of the features will need to provide for its users. In addition, the team in collaboration with the client will develop and approve design sketches depicting each feature and the required user interactions with each feature.

During the second semester collaboration continues with the prioritizing of the work and its allocation into a series of two week segments with delivery planned on or before the end of the semester’s last week of instruction. At the completion of each two week segment of work, the team and the client will assess the work; agree on whatever changes might be needed as well as plan for work to be completed in the next two week segment.

We do expect that the time and effort expended will be positive and productive for the team but also for the client. I do check with clients each semester on progress and the effectiveness of the collaboration. In addition, I hope that clients will feel free to contact me if there are questions or if issues arise that might require my attention.

OWNERSHIP OF THE SOFTWARE PRODUCT. Typically, upon completion of the project there are no formal agreements as to the ownership of the software produced by our senior project team. While the software and all of the supporting materials are delivered to the client as a condition of completion of the project, team members share ownership with the client. However, if the client requires clear and legal title to the software (or some other arrangement), a separate agreement should be prepared and signed by the client and the team. In either case, the Computer Science Department reserves the right to use the software and the materials produced solely as a sample of student work.

The Spring semester begins on January 23rd and our first meeting with the new set of project teams is scheduled for that week. If you are interested in working with one of our teams, I will look forward to receiving your proposal.

If any further information is needed, please contact me at (916) 278-7324 or by Email at buckley@csus.edu.