Computer Technology Professor and Students Deliver High-End Results to Global Communications Company

Lisa Boyes
Electrical and computer engineer professor Dr. Khalid Danok has made the educational, technological and funding connections that have put Motorola Canada on the road to commercializing a new wireless application. In 2007, Dr. Danok’s third-year students in George Brown’s Computer System Technology program engaged in a field project as a course requirement—“a field project likely at the highest end that our students have ever experienced,” says Dr. Danok. The Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Connections Program funded the research, through which final-year undergraduates work with industry partners on an industry-generated project.

Motorola Canada specializes in broadband, embedded and wireless systems for diverse clients in health care, warehousing and retail operations. Working with a new Motorola device (a personal digital assistant, or PDA), with a Motorola engineer and with Dr. Danok’s supervision and training, eight students over five months developed and demonstrated the capability of their software application design in health care and warehousing scenarios. The device connected with a server and its database, then retrieved and displayed the required data. The students also installed the server. When the students presented their PDA software simulations to Motorola Canada at their Mississauga plant, and then to OCE during a campus visit, both were markedly impressed.

Now in 2008, with his students in the post-diploma Wireless Networking Program, Dr. Danok has begun a new project, developing and demonstrating an interactive voice response (IVR) system for industry partner Canadian Computer Technology. The ARI Venture Fund is supporting this project. The goal is to configure and install a complete network voice-over phone system, for example, to enable the customer to be connected directly to a computer when ordering pizza.

In the case of Dr. Danok and his students, “getting it while it’s hot” seems to describe their field and their approach.

George Brown College, with 30,000 full- and part-time students and more than 900 faculty in more than 150 programs, aims to be a top community college of choice for applied research investment by industry and other partners. Its applied research strengths include advanced engineering and microelectronics; nursing and the social sciences; health informatics; IT; and design and new media. George Brown is currently allied with nine other Ontario colleges in the Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation, started with a $3.5m grant from the Ministry of Research and Innovation. CONII is building college capacity to bring research to the marketplace.