

Faculty Exchange Program Report

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My experience with the Carnegie Mellon Portugal faculty exchange program actually started far away from Pittsburgh. With the generous supports from Entertainment Technology Center, I joined a group of 80 Master of Entertainment Technology students along with several other faculties and staffs for an one-week west coast trip to visit more than 30 industrial partners and companies in Los Angeles and Silicon Valley, including Disney Imagineering, Pixar, DreamWorks, Electronic Arts, Zynga and many other big players. This trip was not only to visit fancy companies, but also for students to determine their career goal. I was particularly amazed by the strong CMU alumni network, and was inspired to better prepare our students for the job market, which hopefully will bring long-term benefits to Portuguese universities.

Flying back to Pittsburg after the intensive week, I was greeted by *Robby the Robot* from *Forbidden Planet* along with other famous robots from sci-fi movies at the spaceship-like hallway at the Entertainment Technology Center. Other corridors are also decorated and transformed to a museum of entertainment technology. No wonder, students and faculties working in such environment could come up with various creative and amazing ideas and projects.

During the semester, I have attended several courses fully as regular MET students will do. This helps me to better understand the overall curriculum and individual course design, and how such design can provide an environment for students to combine arts and technology to work in an interdisciplinary project. I also participated faculty meetings to see how students are evaluated, and what are expected. In addition to ETC, I also collaborated with faculties from Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Department of Psychology, and School of Design for several research projects. As a result, one research proposal about serious gaming for rehabilitation purpose was submitted for evaluation.

The climax of my visit to Pittsburgh happened during the Building Virtual World Festival. Students from dual-degree MET program presented their “attractions”, in which visitors could interact with the actors and environment to enjoy the stories they created. During the festival, I also present an interactive music experience that I designed, created and implemented during my stay in Pittsburgh. The experience involved participants creating music using Xbox Kinect controller as the input device. Among several virtual music instruments I created, one is called Virtual Theremin, which is an augmented version of the very first electronic music instrument in the human history. The interactive installation was very appreciated during the festival, and I received lots of valuable feedbacks for future projects.

The only pity about this visit was that I had to cut my stay shorter because of my family emergency. I did not have the chance to say good-bye properly to many of my new friends in Pittsburgh. In any case, this is a very precious experience to me, and I believe this program should be continued and even expanded, so that more faculties involved Carnegie Mellon Portugal can benefit from this exchange program in the future.