

## Summary – development interview I-Tech – 10-12-2019

### Create your own future – acknowledgement of the programme's 'color'.

I-Tech has potential to grow into an evolved version that is ready for the future. Now is the time to take the step towards explicit definition of the programme. In this process, the support of the I-Tech community is essential. I-Tech needs a more accurate profile. The main question is; where do you position yourself? It has evolved from Computer Science and slowly the essence of the programme is shifting due to ongoing technological and societal changes. This means that I-tech should develop a clearer vision in order to establish a stronger position. Several good aspects within I-Tech have the potential to enhance this stronger profile. The most promising aspects are outlined below.

#### **Terminology**

Description of curriculum components: From the terminology used, it appears that I-Tech is a Computer Science programme. How do the names of courses express the identity of the programme? Make the terminology recognizable in the curriculum.

Considerations:

- On the one hand, you would like to preserve that you are a technical study, but on the other hand you would like to make recognizable that you have a design component in the course. There is parallel here with the master's programme Media Technology in Leiden, which is in a similar position and might offer new insights in how to address this dual profile.
- Design component: the authentic side of human-machine interaction and user-centered design can be identified, but there is also design as originated from design programmes, that becomes more and more important in the field of Interaction Technology. It is not only the question if 'it works', but it is also important how it looks; do people want to use it?

#### **Students**

Overall I-Tech students are very bright, involved, honest and assertive. They indicate that the programme is not only about knowledge and skills, but also about impact. New generations of students are rapidly changing. Within six years, we are dealing with generation 'alpha'<sup>1</sup>. The programme can have a particular appeal for female students. Next to this, the focus in recruiting students should be a good mixture of international students, students from both the bachelors Technical Computer Science and Creative Technology and other nation-wide educational institutes.

Considerations:

It is essential that students are being involved in the process of innovation. They choose specifically for this study field, know what they want and how to get there. They are strongly led by their internal drive and motivation. When profiling the programme this is a quality that should be preserved and displayed. Nevertheless, the bachelor students of Creative Technology can use more encouragement to become aware of their identity not only for their own professional career, but also to gain their interest for studying I-Tech.

#### **Flexibility**

I-Tech should be in flux and should continue innovating by constantly adapting the content of the programme in consistency with the present time regarding the (technological) developments of society. I-tech explicitly considers both the students and the industry itself as partners in shaping the programme. This helps to accomplish desired improvements in the programme and the cultural changes this brings.

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<sup>1</sup> Children born between ± 2011 and 2025 are defined as generation alpha.

Considerations:

Make sure you are always in the lead to shape your future. By using the transition process as an excuse the programme seems insecure. However, *change* should be seen as part of who you are. Make it a custom to look at the curriculum and current topics within the industry every year and continuously modify the programme accordingly. Allow students to define their identity. Provide them the opportunity to distinguish themselves by a personal focus (for instance on computer science, sustainability, research, design or technology).

### **Design Lab**

The design lab is an unique environment that contributes very well to the curriculum. It has an open and accessible character and offers possibilities to all sorts of initiatives in cross-disciplinary cooperation. In the Design Lab, it is easy to meet other teachers, students and researchers from other disciplines, which sometimes leads to interesting projects.

Considerations:

I-Tech students have a focus on creating impact. They are sensitive to developments around them, but not necessarily world improvers. It becomes increasingly important to give students space and opportunity within the programme to allow for cross-disciplinary approaches. The Design Lab can support this, but it is important to keep exploring more solutions.

### **Community**

Students jointly desire to have a community as peers also with other students from other disciplines, teachers and the outer world. The programme can make progress in building a stronger community, in which diversity in backgrounds<sup>2</sup> has a chance to merge more easily.

Consideration:

The study association Proto is currently contributing very actively to community building where also international students are being involved. The link between the bachelor Creative Technology and the master Interaction Technology should become stronger.

### **In six years from now...**

I-Tech is an even stronger programme with a highly confident and flexible programme management, which creates new opportunities and is currently looking for ways to innovate the program. Its own discipline stands in the middle of other disciplines. The inflow consists of excellent students from generation alpha. The students know exactly what they want and are very capable of considering their options and making choices (if needed with support of a mentor). The teachers in this multi-disciplinary environment offer a broad range of education. The programme has adapted to the demands and characteristics of this new audience. It has found a solution in translating the ongoing technological changes and its impact on society into fitting innovations for the programme. It has evolved to a distinctive programme that is on the move. It takes the initiative in reaction to the variety of needs that the outer world presents. Furthermore it can deal in a flexible way with the dynamics of the industry and society. Both staff and students have a mature awareness of the programmes identity and the sense of community is strengthened. Moreover, they have reached a better understanding of their own discipline, which actually goes beyond being an 'extended version of Computer Science'.

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<sup>2</sup> Diversity for example in nationality, prior education and knowledge, occupation (researchers, teachers, students), gender, industry, etc.