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**Spring semester 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY - 30<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

During my stay at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), my main objective consisted of setting up a dual degree between the University of Madeira (UMa) and CMU. Nowadays, in engineering, as well as in many different fields, we use ICT to develop our projects. Generally speaking, we live in an ICT environment to reach our goals. As a consequence, a new educational program has been developed at the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at CMU. This program, called *Advanced Infrastructure Systems*, mainly aims to provide civil engineers with expertise in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, to enhance their competences and competitiveness. We aim to replicate and partially expand the same program at UMa.

To this end, I have been introduced to a vibrant team of faculty members, whose interest in research is far beyond the expected standard. I always found people who put me in a comfortable position from the very beginning, when I introduced myself and my proposed ideas for collaborating, until the last day of my visit. I set up a number of seminars to be provided to students in Madeira from the CMU faculty. Some of those have been already presented with very good feedback from students. As a result, starting from next year, we'll be able to start the AIS program also at UMa, which is a very promising and exciting achievement.

Meanwhile, I attended some of the AIS courses as well as weekly seminars. This enriched my research knowledge and provided me with new ideas for projects and collaborations. Finally I also provided a seminar to AIS students at CMU, named "Problem solving approach for systems modelling with civil and environmental engineering applications".

Carnegie Mellon University is an exciting place where everyone works together to achieve excellence in research. I would strongly recommend to anyone to be part of this enriching experience.

*Pittsburgh, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011*

*Barbara Pizzileo*