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An Innovative Experience to Make the University more Appealing to Future Students at the School of Design Engineering ETSID

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During 2010/2011, the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Spain, in collaboration with the Secretary of State of Education at the Regional Government of Valencia, started up Praktikum Campus, an innovative programme intended for High School Students to have a first contact with the University [1, 2]. Its purpose was to facilitate the election of the students' future university studies. Within the framework of this programme, a selection of first year High School students of Valencia (equivalent to grade 11 students) with majors in Science and Technology and excellent academic record, performed a small project within a research group at UPV, on some of the areas covered by the UPV Bachelor Engineering (BEng) degrees.

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The School of Industrial Design Engineering (ETSID) at UPV has participated in this first edition of Praktikum Campus by offering projects in the field of its different BEng degrees, all of them belonging to the “Industrial and Aeronautics” discipline [3]. Every morning, students performed their project (individually or in groups of 2-4 students) within a research group at ETSID and under the supervision of 1-2 teachers. Afterwards, each student filled an on-line blog in which they described the tasks they had been performing that day within their assigned project, the main results they had obtained, and their personal opinions and impressions about the programme [3]. Afternoons were devoted to other activities at UPV: in some of them, students could visit research laboratories and facilities at ETSID, while in other occasions, joint activities were organised with the rest of the students taking part in the Praktikum Campus programme, so that the exchange of experiences between all of them could be promoted. Finally, each student prepared a presentation summarising the main results of his/her research work that was later recorded on video and published in the UPV PoliTube channel [4].

In this paper, the development of the Praktikum Campus programme at ETSID has been analyzed, focusing on the participation rate and the satisfaction degree of the students taking part in this experience.

In general, the ETSID participation in this initiative has been very satisfactory: 21% of the Praktikum Campus projects were carried out at ETSID, involving 21% of the students enrolled in this programme and 25% of the UPV teachers taking part in this initiative. These results indicate that, in this first edition of Praktikum Campus, ETSID has been the UPV School with the largest number of projects and participants (both students and teachers).

On the other hand, results of the assessment survey that 71% of the students participating in Praktikum Campus filled the last day they attended the UPV, show that 94% of the students have valued very positively this initiative, 90% of the students would recommend this programme to their peers, and 91% of the students consider that this experience has contributed to help them to better understand the BEng degree related to the research work they had carried out. Furthermore, the analysis of the blog written by the students who attended ETSID during Praktikum Campus reveals that a great majority of them coincide in highlighting the key role of this initiative to help establish a first contact with UPV and the university in general, as well as to provide information on its BEng degrees, thus facilitating the election of their future university studies.

These satisfactory results are very encouraging for the new edition of Praktikum Campus that is going to be held at UPV in July 2012. ■

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