FAST-NU holds 7th international workshop on field & assistive robotics

FAST-NU organized an international workshop on field and assistive robotics from October 17 to 18, 2014 at Lahore campus. The main focus was to initiate new and exciting areas of research in field and off-road robotics. This workshop was series of similar events regularly being held since 2011. About 250 delegates participated in the workshop.

A number of speakers invited from different famous universities from Pakistan and Germany addressed the workshop. Speakers presented their research work related to planning algorithm, biometric robotics, agricultural robotics, robotics in society and other issues that are related to the autonomous robots.

Rector FAST-NU Dr. Amir Muhammed delivered the key welcome note. Dr. Yasir Niaz Khan welcomed all faculty members and participants. Prof. Dr. Karsten Berns from University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, presented his research work which was on robotics in agriculture.

The workshop poster sessions were held during tea breaks where all researchers pasted their posters related to their research work. There were also robot demonstrations arranged by Dr. Umar Suleman in which different universities participated. Eight groups from FAST-NU Lahore, COMSATS University Lahore, LUMS and UET Lahore gave demonstrations of robots. With the efforts of Dr. Yasir Niaz Khan from FAST-NU Lahore and Prof. Dr. Karsten Berns this conference proved to be a great success. City42 news channel covered the whole conference.

INQAAHE recognize FAST-NU for quality assurance

INQAAHE, a worldwide association of over 200 organizations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education, has given prominent coverage to FAST-NU’s efforts for quality assurance in its bulletin of September 2014. Getting ample space in news bulletin of an international forum has a significant impact in national and international ranking frameworks for universities.

INQAAHE selected a number of university’s initiatives including provision of training on quality and productivity in higher education by QEC to Fiji Higher Education Commission and educational institutions in the Republic of Fiji, presentation of a research about self-assessment in international statistical sciences conference by ISOSS (Islamic Society of Statistical Sciences) and Dow International Medical College, and participation of QEC in NBEAC accreditation process of a business school.

This achievement is credited to collective work of the management and QEC team from Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Faisalabad, and Islamabad campuses. The QEC team is committed to provide due support for academic excellence in FAST-NU as per HEC requirements and best practices at national and international levels.
FAST-NU Karachi campus recently organized an orientation session 2014 for the incoming students to welcome the newcomers and acquaint them with academic rules and regulations of the university.

Dr. Aziz ur Rehman Saifee opened the orientation session. After Dr. Saifee, Mr. Waseem Uddin informed the students about the advantages of joining FAST-NU and all the great prospects it carries for the newly enrolled students.

Alumni members also shared their experiences of studying at FAST-NU. They told the students how FAST-NU helped them in making their career.

Director FAST-NU Karachi Campus Dr. Zubair Ahmed Shaikh, in his address, told the students about all the possibilities they can take advantage of by working hard at FAST-NU and the new heights they can reach by being an obedient student. Mr. Masroor Ali from the Administration promised the new students full cooperation from the administration. Mr. Zafar Nasir and Dr. Asim Ur Rehman also gave speeches to the parents and their children attending the orientation session. A flag hoisting ceremony was also held after the session.

Peshawar campus of FAST-NU organized an intra-university sports competition from October 23 to 30. Matches of variety of games such as cricket, futsal, volleyball, chess, table tennis, tug-of-war, badminton and basketball were arranged during the competition.

The sports were played with great zeal and not only the students but the staff and faculty also enjoyed immensely by watching as well as participating in the games.

Organized by the FAST Sports Society, the event observed participation of approximately 260 students. Teams qualifying the intra-batch competitions competed in the inter-batch competition for the “Sports Week Champions 2014/15” title. Batch 11 clinched the event finals of cricket, tug-of-war, basketball, and chess. Batch 14 outplayed its opponents in the final matches of futsal and volleyball. Batch 12 clinched the badminton single and double titles.

Overall, Batch 11 emerged victorious and Batch 14 as runner-up. The event is going to help us to prepare a brilliant squad for external sporting events.

Students enjoyed the event and appreciated the hard work of organizers and support of campus administration in organization of the event including President Fast Sports Society Sahibzada Farhan Amin and Faculty Adviser Mr. Muhammad Ehtesham.

Computer Science Department and Quality Enhancement Cell at Lahore campus successfully planned and executed the self-assessment visit for the BS Computer Science program on September 20.

The assessment visit was conducted with an intention to assess the BS (CS) program against the defined criteria of Higher Education Commission internal self-assessment. Assessment team members Dr. Tania Habib, Assistant Professor, UET, External Member, and Dr. Umar Suleman, Assistant Professor, FAST-NU Lahore, Internal Member, were nominated by Prof. Shafiq-ur-Rehman, Head of Computer Science Department, FAST-NU Lahore Campus, as per HEC guidelines for self-assessment.

Director FAST-NU Lahore Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Director Islamabad campus Dr. Arshad Ali and Prof. Shafiq-ur-Rehman shared their views on quality education and importance of continuous self-evaluation. Dr. Zafar Iqbal emphasized on strategic planning for quality education. Dr. Arshad Ali highlighted the need for necessary documentation of the policies and practices while Prof. Shafiq-ur-Rehman highlighted the actual implementation process.

Overall assessment visit proved to be an outstanding opportunity for all the stakeholders to share the best practices regarding learning and teaching, and to learn from each other in addition to identifying the improvement opportunities.
IEEE Week 2014 was organized at FAST-NU Islamabad campus from October 16 to 20 with a theme of “Vision beyond the Horizon”.

26 innovative technical events divided in 8 categories comprising Robo Pike, IT Boulevard, Engineering Technology, Energy Influx, Health Corridor, Agricultural and Environmental Freeway, and Education expedition were held during the week. Moreover, two international events including International Robotics Challenge in collaboration with IIT, Mumbai, India (where FAST-NU Islamabad has already been declared as one of the many zonal partners by IIT India), and IEEE Extreme 8.0 were also held.

More than 1500 participants from 25 prestigious institutions participated to show their talent in technical fields. Top two positions of IRC Zonal round were secured by FAST-NU Islamabad teams. These teams will represent Pakistan in the final round of IRC which will be held in Mumbai in January 2015.

Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masud, Deputy CEO of Huawei Technologies, graced the opening ceremony of IEEE Week 2014 with his presence. He informed the audience that three out of four top newly hired engineers of Huawei are FAST-NU Islamabad graduates. Apart from the national and international technical events, there was an event “Engineers Developing the Society”. The host team managed to gather around 75 children from underprivileged areas. By the end of the competition, every kid had mastered in at least one technical task taught by the trainers.

IEEE Week managed to spread the idea of vision and innovation nationwide. A team of 25 enthusiastic individuals from Khushal Khan University of Karak visited FAST-NU Islamabad campus to observe and learn from events at IEEE Week’14.

The student organizing body comprising Mr. Muhammad Asim Sujra, Chair IEEE FAST-NU Islamabad, and Ms. Alina Haider Zaidi, Chair WIE FAST-NU Islamabad, paid special thanks to Director FAST-NU Islamabad Dr. Arshad Ali Shahid, Head of Department Dr. Waseem Ikram, IEEE Counselor Mr. Aamer Hafeez, IEEE Islamabad Section Chair Dr. Aftab Maroof, IEEE Week Mentor Mr. Ahsan Khan, IEEE Week Supervisor Mr. Musab Khalid and faculty members who served as mentors in various events.

The administration appreciated the efforts of students and motivated them to continue this effort in the coming years.

Medal Awarding Ceremony

To honor the students who demonstrated outstanding results in the academic year Fall 2013 – Spring 2014, a medal awarding ceremony was held at FAST-NU Peshawar campus on October 25. Faculty, administrative staff, parents, guests and students attended the event.

A total of 51 medals were awarded in different graduate programs of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Management studies. Twenty toppers of their respective batches were awarded gold medals, second position holders got seventeen silver medals and fourteen bronze medals were awarded to the third position holders.

Director Peshawar campus Dr. Tariq Rahim distributed these medals among the students. On the occasion he said that the achievement that we recognize today is possible because FAST-NU is an excellent institution that provides the right mixture of outstanding teaching, a learning culture that values diversity of opinion and facilities that enable students to test their ideas.

He also congratulated the winning students and expressed his profound gratitude to the parents for their presence.

‘A morning with Talat Hussain’

Mr. Talat Hussain, a legendary actor and narrator, visited FAST-NU Karachi campus on October 23. He was the first guest for the newly initiated series of guest visits under “A Morning with a Celebrity” initiative of the campus. The main objective of these visits is to acquaint students with notable people from various fields.
FAST-NU students develop new gaming APPS

FAST-NU has never ceased to produce prospect young computer scientists and software developers since its inception. The students of Karachi campus have thrived in developing two games including Binary Fall and Tap256.

Binary Fall was developed by FAST-NU’s Syed Mamoon Burney, Omer Farooq and their friend from NED, Ammar Hassan. The team developed the game in their summer break. The game is about precision tapping and sharpness of the mind.

The second game Tap 256 was developed by a very brilliant and talented group of Batch 11 students named “Programmers’11”, assisted by a developer Jarri Abidi. This game is a very captivating and interesting variant of the concept of piano tiles. Programmers’11 also have several other products in the market. Both apps are available for free at Google Play Store.

FYP gets first position in SUPARCO’s contest

The final year project (FYP) from the Electrical Engineering Department of FAST-NU Lahore campus has won the first prize in the Engineering Project Competition held at World Space Week 2014, organized by SUPARCO.

The project titled Field Assistive Wearable Interfaces for Blind, aimed to design and implement low-cost wearable interfaces to assist the visually impaired (blind & deaf-blind) people in the areas of education, communication, social interaction, information transmission, navigation and mobility guidance. The interfaces use the concept of vibro-tactile haptics effectively integrated with Braille-code to accomplish the mentioned tasks. Urwa Arshad, M. Hassan Ahmed and Jawaria Ansari were the members of the group which undertook this project. Mr. Omer Saleem Bhatti was the adviser of the project.

This project group is also associated with Government Degree College for Special Education, Johar Town, Lahore. The liaison helps optimizing the performance of the product interfaces. These interfaces are tested in real-time on students and instructors and are improved according to their suggestions, experiences and feedback.

FAST-NU inks an accord with SKKU

FAST-NU and College of Information and Communication Engineering, Sungkyunkwan University South Korea (SKKU) signed an academic, educational and cultural exchange agreement on October 23 at FAST-NU Islamabad campus. Dr. Mohammad Ayub Alvi, Dean Academics, FAST-NU, and Dr. Dong Ryol Shin, Dean College of Information and Communication Engineering, Sungkyunkwan University South Korea, were present on the occasion. Both institutions mutually agreed to work towards reciprocal exchange of academic staff and students, to foster engagement in joint research projects, exchange of academic publications and information, and to promote other academic and cultural activities.

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