

INNOVATION IN WIL: ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

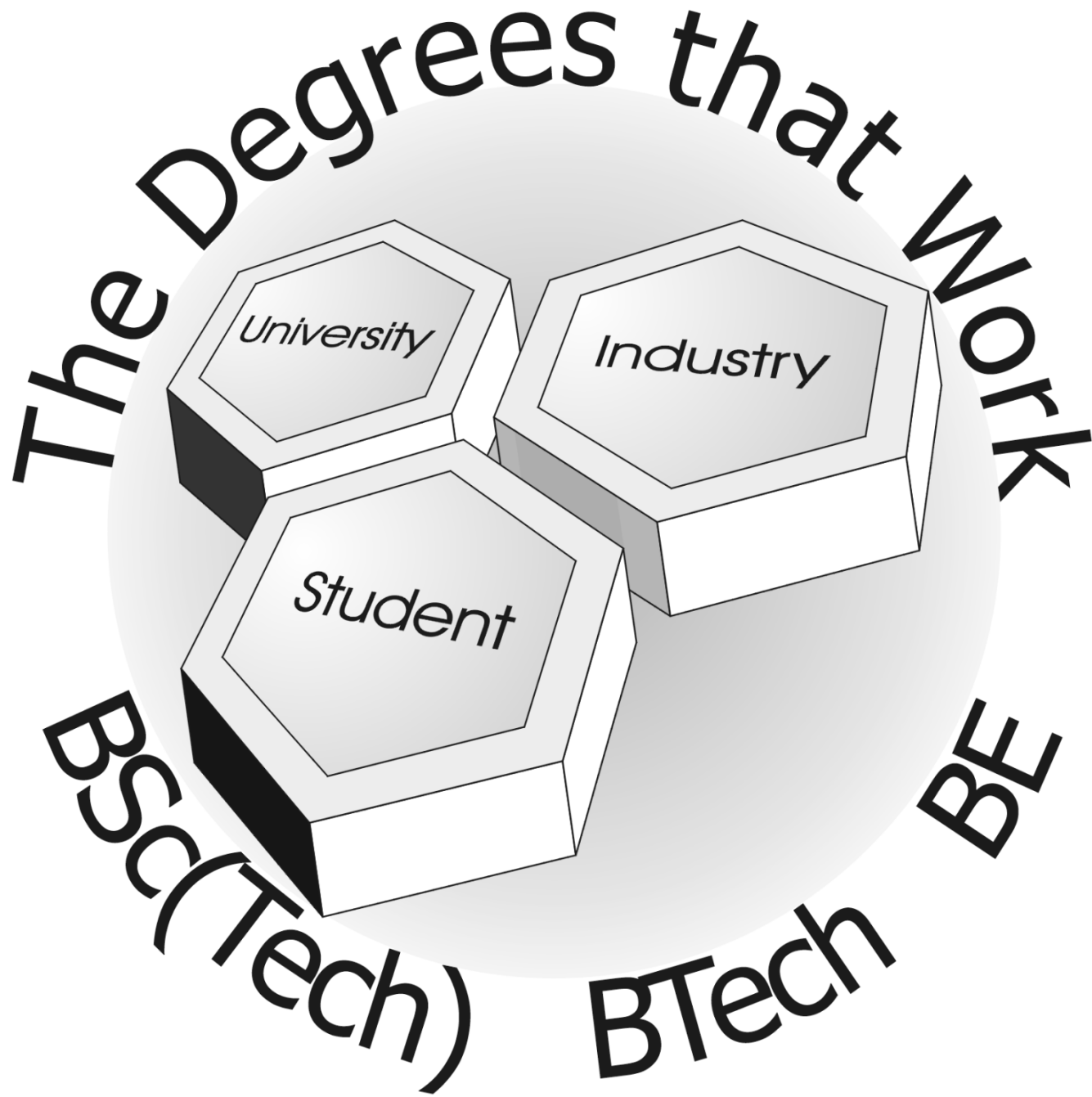
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Employer engagement

- Fundamentally, without placements we have no placement programmes
- Placements are with employers, in industry
- SO, our relationship with employers is, thus, fundamentally important to the success of a placement programme

Literature

- Much work done in the 1980's, published in JCEI
- Context was there were more placements than students
- Indicated stakeholder commitment (relationship commitment) is resource hungry for all
- Key was the 'tripartite relationship'.
 - Within the 'cooperative' model



Recent literature

- Stakeholders views of the nature of the 'tripartite relationship' is not the same as in 1980's
- Employers valued the personal connections (Fleming, 2014)
- Fleming (2015) found established beliefs on the nature of the relationship no longer true
 - Strategic alignment rather than partnership
 - Valued authentic, friendly, beneficial corporation
- Call for better understanding of tangible benefits (Smith & Betts, 2000)
 - Transparency benefits, Shift thinking from cost to investment
- A need for better shared understanding (Beggs et al, 2006; Martin & Leberman, 2005; Patrick et al, 2008)

Discussion questions

1. From your own experiences what are the critical success factors for sustainable WIL relationships?
2. What strategies can be used to incorporate these success factors in your own programmes?
3. What best describes the type of relationship university should have with industry?

Things to keep in mind

- The relationship with the employer is fundamentally important
- Keyword is 'relationship'.
 - Everyone needs to invest into a relationship – time, resources, commitment
 - Involves trust and 'intimacy' (access to privileges/benefits) from both sides
- However, must not forget that the student is central to this relationship
 - The student is a core to the relationship
 - Serves as a bridge between university and industry