Memorandum

To: CSci 8801, All students
CC:
From: Dr. Mats Heimdahl
Date: 9/3/01
Re: Team Selection and Group Organization

Overview
In this class you will work in small groups. Most homework assignments (if not all) will be group assignments. This memo outlines the group selection process, the expectations on the groups, and some hints on how to run an effective team.

Group Selection
The class will be divided into groups of people. Students are strongly encouraged to form their own groups of compatible people. A team should consist of three people. If you cannot find a team to work with, you can submit your name to your Professor and he will assign you to a team.

The team selection process works as follows:

1. Attempt to find a team to work with. If you find two friends, email Professor Heimdahl with the information requested below and you have a team.

2. If you cannot find two friends, you can still email Professor Heimdahl. We will assign the remaining members to your team.

3. If you are on your own, please email Professor Heimdahl. We will assign you to a team.

Information needed in the email:
In the email I want to see (1) team name, (2) name of each team member, and (3) email for each team member. You are required to maintain a web page, instructions available on the course web site.

Group Organization
Most students prefer a democratic group organization. In a minority of groups this can in fact work. However, most groups find they need some form of leader—-you can elect a permanent group manager or rotate throughout the course.

Division of Labor
While it is to be expected that some members of your group will be better writers, some better programmers, and so on, you are not to divide the labor on these grounds alone. This class is to be a
learning experience, and each of you should get a substantial amount of practice in all of these areas, not just the ones you are already good at.

**Problems in the Team**

Your team is almost certain to have some problems. For example, some team member will not pull their load, might not be as prepared as the rest of the team, or simply does not want to work on the assignments. In this case, do *not* come running to the TAs or the Professor for help. You are working in a team and you are responsible for resolving the problems. Naturally, if the problems are severe, feel free to come and see us. Just do not expect us to be able to solve the problems for you—switching team members will only be allowed in the most severe of circumstances (it has *never* happened in one of my classes).

From experience, not knowing what the expectations are is the most common problem in teams. On team member may think he is pulling his load, but the rest of the team is griping amongst themselves that this person "never does things right". By keeping all expectations explicit through the action items on meeting minutes, you can avoid a lot of problems.

Should the problems be severe, you are encouraged to (1) give your project TA an anonymous complaint and if the TA cannot resolve the situation (2) provide the Professor with a similar note and he will attempt resolve the situation.

**Group Evaluation**

When working in the team you will be subjected to a peer evaluation. You will also evaluate your peers. When performing the peer evaluation you should be honest without being vengeful. The process of peer evaluation is described on the web page. Peer evaluations must be turned at the end of the class.

**Expected Workload (preliminary since the class is new)**

This course may be a lot of work. The assignments may not seem that tough when you start out, but you will discover that producing models can be a difficult and time-consuming task.

**Remember:** Grades are not assigned in proportion to how many hours you spend on the assignments. Grades are assigned based on the quality of your work.

**Use your time wisely!**

**Due Date for Team Selection**

Tuesday, September 11