



Guelph Engineering Society



Report on CFES Congress 2009 at Carleton University,
January 4th-10th, 2009.

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1. Purpose of Conference

The main purpose of this conference is to have all the schools from across Canada present to be able to elect the new executive for the CFES, as well as set mandates for the CFES to follow during the upcoming year. This conference was the annual general meeting (AGM) of the CFES.

2. Personal Goals for Conference

My goals for this conference were to develop a better network of people from across the country and not just in Ontario. Another goal was to talk more with the schools in southern Ontario that are close to ours and possibly begin to plan some joint school social events. I also was hoping to learn from the way that other schools engineering societies run, so that we can possibly better our events and get more student involvement.

3. Summary of Events

CFES for Dummies

- This session was about what the CFES does as an organization
- The 4 activities of the CFES are hosting CFES Congress, the CFES Presidents Meeting, the Canadian Engineering Competition, and running Project Magazine (or ProMag)
- ProMag is a magazine that any student in engineering from any school in Canada can submit content too, and is all student published in both English and French
- CFES is the liaison with Engineers Canada, and the official voice of Canadian engineering students
- The CFES also runs complementary education courses on many things like soft skills as well as advanced

bonding

- bonding is the German equivalent of the CFES
- bonding's main focus is hosting career fairs where there are between 60 and 255 companies that show up
- bonding is not directly affiliated with any of the universities, and develops all revenue by holding these career fairs

BEST

- BEST is another equivalent to the CFES only it is made up of European countries, and represents students in applied science as well
- They are a lot bigger than the CFES and have 2600 active members
- BEST's main focus is holding the Complementary Education (CE) courses that the CFES is starting to develop, and host about 100 courses a year, with at least 22 students
- There is lots of communication between the universities, and some of these CE courses can even be used as credit

Team Building

- It is usually good to develop some ground rules when initially forming a team, so that meeting will run smoothly
- These ground rules help to make sure that all members are comfortable with the environment, creates an even playing field with members, as well as helps with time management
- Starting and finishing on time is always key to making people happy and stay focused
- The two parts of teamwork are: The Task, and The process
- The stages that all teams go through are forming, storming, norming, and performing, and once these stages repeat (with the exception of forming) in a team, when new issues arise
- Forming is when the team is just getting to know each other and the roles on the team are being established
- Storming is when the team is when there are conflicts with team members
- Norming is when these conflicts are resolved
- Performing is when the team has put aside differences and the team is now fully functioning and getting lots of work done

CELF Session

- This session was about the Canadian Engineering Leadership Forum summit that will be taking place in May of this year, but was basically an introduction to what the different organizations that are helping to organize the summit are about
- These organizations are Engineers Canada, the Association of Canadian Engineering Companies, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Engineering Institute of Canada
- All of these organizations do some work to promote engineering as a profession, but do so in very different ways
- For more information, or to know how you could become more involved, you can visit the websites of these organizations

Your First Job

- This session was very informative, and the main focus seemed to be on the misconceptions that fresh graduates have about their first engineering jobs
- The first misconception is that your first engineering job will be fairly easy. This is not the case as sometimes you may have the freshest knowledge at the company and be considered the subject matter expert
- Another misconception is that people are always watching over you. Again this is not the case, and time management becomes important, and you may need to ask for guidance if you find yourself lost
- The next misconception that was talked about was the fact that your opinion is irrelevant
- Another one that was discussed was the misconception that you have no decision-making power, as you will have a small to medium part in the decisions that are made on the projects you are working on
- The final misconception is that you don't have any real responsibility. This is not true and you may even find yourself leading a team
- Meetings and briefings at your company are also very good to attend, as these can be ways to discover side projects, and it looks good to show interest

Sponsorship

- This session was about how to get sponsorship in your engineering society
- One of the main things that was talked about is that it is always good to send out a quick email followed up by a quick phone call to companies that you are trying to get to sponsor your engineering society or your event
- A very key thing is to also thank your returning sponsors, so that they don't drop you
- Providing the sponsor with a resume CD is also a good idea, if the event you are running is big
- It will require perseverance to get sponsors, as companies are sometimes difficult to communicate with
- You also need to go after the sponsors well in advance, so that they have time to advertise the fact that they are sponsoring, or there isn't as much of a point in them doing it

Social Issues in Engineering

- This session was about the social issues in engineering as well as what it means to be an engineer and ways to get the public to realize what the profession is
- It was discussed that while growing up, everyone knows what doctors and lawyers do, but people have the impression that engineers build bridges or drive trains, which is obviously not the case
- Even people applying to engineering out of high school don't really know what all the profession entails, its more just a thing you apply to if you are good at math and science
- One suggestion was, during National Engineering Month, or similar events, instead of having people build little hover crafts, or holding an egg drop competition, you could have them build a water treatment device. This would allow the person to actually see a practical use for what they had done, rather than just a cool toy

NCWIE

- The National Conference on Women in Engineering is now a service that the CFES will offer, and this conference will be held every year
- This conference is open to all students that want to learn about the social issues facing engineers, specifically the underrepresentation of women
- According to Engineers Canada, undergraduate engineering contains only %18 women, and only %6 work in the industry, so one of the things at these conferences is they discuss why this could be, and ways to fix it
- For more information on this conference I encourage you to read the reports on the website of the Guelph students who attended.

4. Evaluation

i) *Conference Organizers*

Some of the things that I felt could have been better about this conference were the scheduling of meals and the sessions. Lunch seemed very late when we were eating breakfast early, and I felt like this made it harder to stay as focused as I should have been as the day went on. I also felt that the schedule could have been put out more in advance along with delegate packages. A head delegates meeting on the first night would have also been beneficial. Other than that I feel that the conference ran smoothly and it was obvious that the organizer put a lot of work into it. I also really enjoyed the food that was provided.

ii) *Delegate*

At this conference I felt like I did represent the University well and I did attend all the sessions that I could. I also learned about ways to effectively run our Engineering Society, as well as what types of events that other schools do and how they work to decrease student apathy and ways to get more people involved. I also felt like I did do a good job at networking with schools outside Ontario so that the region of Ontario looked less cliquey as in the past.