



Guelph Engineering Society



Report on CFES Congress at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON,
January 3rd-7th, 2010.

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1. Purpose of Conference

Congress is the Annual General Meeting for the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students, where the new executive is chosen and it is determined what their goals for the year will be. Also, throughout the conference, delegates learn about CFES, their initiatives and what they can do back at their school to be involved.

2. Personal Goals for Conference

I was looking forward to attending CFES Congress because I hoped to learn a lot of new things about CFES and what they do for engineering students across Canada. Even though I did briefly learn about CFES when I attended FYIC last year, Congress was a much more valuable learning experience on the subject. I also looked forward to meeting other delegates from schools around the country to find out what they are doing with their school that I could potentially bring back here to make student life better. Many of the sessions were extremely informative and provided me with lots of ideas on how to improve student activity within the school. Lastly, I hoped to learn from other EngSoc members from larger schools how we could improve ours to accommodate for the larger school we will become in the next few years. A few of the sessions gave me and other Guelph delegates some ideas on initiatives that could be brought back to the school that will benefit our growing school. I hope to take what I learned at Congress and make CFES and what they do better known back here at Guelph because I think that right now the students are not aware of all that they are doing.

3. Summary of Events

CFES for Dummies

- I had attended this presentation previously at FYIC as well as at the presentation given at our school
- CFES is the ESSCO for all of Canada
- They provide many services and events to engineering students in Canada, including several conferences across the country each year.
- There are opportunities to get involved with CFES, such as executive positions and other various opportunities
- They offer CE courses in the summer term that are on various interesting topics related to engineering; interest in running them isn't extremely high and could be something that Guelph might be able to help with

International Introductions

- bonding is the German equivalent to CFES, BEST is the European equivalent
- both bonding and BEST offer services that are available to all CFES members
- BEST puts on CE type courses that range in subject matter, 100s all year round
- bonding hosts many large career fairs throughout the year all over Germany that lot of companies attend
- both organizations offer many other social activities and conferences as CFES does
- NAESC (USA) and SENZ (New Zealand) are two other organizations that the CFES is affiliated with

Drew Dudley

- Works at the University of Toronto in student leadership
- Used his experiences with student leadership, charity work and education to inspire us to do great things
- Did an amazing job of encouraging us to get involved outside of the classroom and to get the most out of our university education by being more than just a student
- Emphasized that getting the highest marks isn't the most important part of your education; you can still be an amazing person and not have the highest average in your class

Student Spaces

- This session was to discuss student space, its importance to the students and how you can maximize the use of student space to make students happier with their school environment
- Different schools have different types of student space available to them, some schools have more quiet study space, whereas others have recreational lounge type student space
- Biggest challenge is making your student space accessible to all students, how can you make everyone feel welcome in the space/encourage use of the space?
- At Guelph, we will be expanding our student space in the coming years. How will we promote the use of this space by engineering students? How can we make this space everyone's?
- For recreational space, attract students by playing movies in the lounge, have free pizza, cookie, coffee, etc from time to time (students love free food), TV with cable?
- Host various events in the lounge that will attract all different types of students and this will hopefully encourage them to revisit the space more often

Diversity

- This session was to identify different diversity issues and concerns at different schools, and to look at how to improve diverse attendance at EngSoc events
- One approach is to look at updating traditions to make all students feel comfortable and welcome, especially during Frosh Week activities. Updating and changing a tradition can be controversial to some, but is in the best interest of the school. Another approach is to look into branching out to specific groups on campus and host events geared towards those particular groups
- Ultimate goal is to make different groups of students feel welcome and more comfortable in their own school and to diversify the people that come out to events

EngSoc Academic Interests

- This session was to identify how different Engineering Societies are involved in the academic interests of their school and how they help students be sure they are getting all they can out of their engineering education
- The level of involvement in this area is very different at different schools; can be a lot, can be little, can be on a feedback basis from students, etc
- Essentially, being an EngSoc, you are ultimately responsible for being sure that your students are happy with their education and if they are not, work for them and try to initiate change
- Some ideas to help: VP Academic head a committee of year reps to gather concerns from students about their classes to be brought up to appropriate councils etc, course critiques and mid-term course evaluations, establish good relationship with faculty with meetings and events, be the link for students to receive tutoring help

International Mobility

- The purpose of this session was to inform about the international recognition of your Canadian engineering degree and where you are eligible to work after completion of it
- Once you have received an engineering degree within Canada, you are eligible to be licensed anywhere within the country; need to be able to speak French to practice in Quebec
- Canada has many agreements with other countries about the eligibility of licenses between them, Canadian engineering degrees are highly regarded and there are very few countries that you cannot work as an engineer with one
- May be an exam, a series of tests or just an application that needs to be completed to be licensed elsewhere, all depends on the agreement between the two countries

Future of Engineering Education

- The engineering degree is looking to undergo some changes, whether it be to become a mandatory 5 year program or turn completely into a graduate degree
- Concerns are that the length of the program may not be sufficient for the necessary training, and some students are too young to be making these professional decisions this early
- Engineering degree is currently the only professional degree program that is still an undergraduate program
- Another concern is the lack of a well-rounded education currently, there is very little focus on the arts or other important skills such as communication; a 5 year program would allow for more time to take courses like this
- Things to look into: having a supplementary document that accompanies your transcript that has all of your extra-curricular work on it (co-curricular document), this can promote work outside of strictly the engineering type courses – some schools have already started this
- Some tips about making education changes: find someone from the industry to provide input to your dean, president, etc about the skills that they find valuable in an employee, find the faculty member that will help you make change and work with them

Bilingualism

- This session was to discuss the importance of ensuring that the CFES work towards making itself and all of its events bilingual and as comfortable for both French and English speakers alike
- It is very important to establish before an event or activity that it is to be bilingual and that there are certain measures that need to be taken to accommodate for that
- Translation for Congress, and other events, is extremely important and it is also important that the quality of translation is adequate; this can be costly, but it is the price of being a national organization in Canada
- Many schools include on their conference application a question regarding bilingualism, might be a good idea for Guelph to consider

Greening your EngSoc

- This session was to discuss and brainstorm ideas that can make your EngSoc more environmentally friendly
- Important to identify the issues, analyze your impact and find solutions
- Small, everyday changes can make a big difference, such as defaulting the printers to 2-sided etc
- Some EngSocs have an Environmental Director who works with a \$0.00 budget to implement changes within the school, having no budget causes the person to be creative with simple solutions and think outside the box
- Could be important to create a 5 year plan for sustainability for the school

4. Evaluation

i) ***Conference Organizers***

I felt that overall the conference was well run. The sessions that I attended were interesting and relevant, and they ran quite smoothly. It was evident that the organizers had worked hard to make sure that all sessions were interesting topics and that they were useful. Unfortunately, there seemed to be a lot of last minute changes to sessions and it seemed that maybe a lot of things got missed in the planning process. However, with a conference of this size, it is inevitable that things not run perfectly and that some things go wrong. I would say that relatively speaking these changes were acceptable and that the conference was very well run.

ii) ***Delegate***

I feel that I represented the University of Guelph engineering society very well at the conference. I attended all sessions that I was asked to and I feel that I learned a lot from them. I think that I attained all the goals and more that I had set out for myself. I became more and more interested in being involved with our own EngSoc, as well as the larger organizations such as CFES, as the week went on and it made me think about what I plan to do in the future years. I am now interested in running for the VP External position, where I can connect the Guelph EngSoc to the rest of the societies across Canada, based on what I have learned from the sessions I attended throughout the week, etc. If I were to improve my conference experience, I would have liked to contribute a little bit more in discussions and speak up when sharing sessions were held.