

USUCGER BOARD MEETINGMINUTES
May 30, 2003

To: Members of USUCGER
From: Jean-Louis Briaud, President of USUCGER

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

At its May 30, 2003 conference call meeting, the USUCGER Board voted in favor of the following action: creating an education committee (unanimous), creating a research committee (unanimous), changing the E in the USUCGER acronym from United States University Council on Geotechnical Engineering Research to United States University Council on Geotechnical Education and Research (6 yes, 1 abs). According to the Bylaws, each one of these items requires a vote of the whole membership to be enacted upon. I will first summarize the thoughts of the Board and then ask for you vote.

STARTING THE USUCGER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

While the terms of reference of the new committee would be proposed by the Chair of the committee acting as a representative of its membership and accepted by the Board, some of the possible issues to be addressed by the new committee would include

1. Finding convenient ways for young professors to gather much needed practical experience by fostering a stronger interaction between universities and industry (e.g.: industry summer jobs).
2. Finding convenient ways for professors to become better communicators and take advantage of all latest teaching tools.
3. Discuss the content of an introduction to geotechnical engineering course. For example, are we at the point where we can frame soil mechanics in a three phase environment (unsaturated soil mechanics) and treat saturated soil mechanics as a special case of the general theory?
4. Collect data on current practices regarding teaching in different universities: no. of undergraduate courses, no. of graduate courses, textbooks used.

An initial convener for this committee has been chosen by the USUCGER Board (Professor David Elton). If forming this new committee is approved by the membership, Dave would ask (email to everybody) who wishes to be a member of this committee, convene the first meeting (USUCGER workshop in October) where the Chair would be selected by the members. The committee would stay in close contact with other education committees to avoid duplication, but the existence of other such committees was not felt to be a deterrent because USUCGER should have a strong say on this topic.

Proposition: USUCGER starts an Education Committee

Please vote Yes or No by return email to me before July 4th. Yes ___ , No ___

One vote per member institution

STARTING THE USUCGER RESEARCH COMMITTEE

While the terms of reference of the new committee would be proposed by the Chair of the committee acting as a representative of its membership and accepted by the Board, some of the possible issues to be addressed by the new committee would include:

1. identify strategies to develop closer ties between Universities and Industry to foster major research projects and facilitate technology transfer.
2. identify unusual geotechnical related fields where the geotechnical component is underrepresented. (e.g.: agricultural engineering, mechanical engineering, ocean engineering)
3. expand upon the guidelines for obtaining geotechnical research funding (e.g.: Do's and Don'ts list posted on the USUCGER web site).
4. investigate the poor representation of American students in graduate school and explore strategies to improve it while maintaining a diverse international environment.

An initial convener for this committee has been chosen by the USUCGER Board (Professor Carlos Santamarina). If forming this new committee is approved by the membership, Carlos would ask (email to everybody) who wishes to be a member of this committee, convene the first meeting (USUCGER workshop in October) where the Chair would be selected by the members. The committee would stay in close contact with other research committees to avoid duplication, but the existence of other such committees was not felt to be a deterrent because USUCGER should have a strong say on this topic.

Proposition: USUCGER starts a Research Committee

Please vote Yes or No by return email to me before July 4th. Yes ___ , No ___

One vote per member institution.

E is for Education

The first paragraph of the Bylaws states very clearly that the mission of USUCGER involves education and research. Here is that first paragraph.

"The United States Universities Council on Geotechnical Engineering Research, hereinafter referred to as USUCGER, is a voluntary and non-profit organization of universities actively engaged in *education and research* in the field of geotechnical engineering. It is organized for the purpose of concerted action in whatever way may be desirable for the encouragement of such *education and research*."

The USUCGER acronym however does not recognize this basic premise. We are able to remedy this weakness without having to change the actual acronym. It is probably a minor point but that should not prevent us to make it right.

Proposition: USUCGER stands for United States University Council on Geotechnical Education (instead of Engineering) and Research

Please vote Yes or No by return email to me before July 4th. Yes ___ , No ___

One vote per member institution