

**MINUTES OF USUCGER BOARD MEETING
SPRUCE ROOM, CNN OMNI HOTEL
ATLANTA, GA
OCTOBER 4, 2003**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean-Louis Briaud-President, Susan Burns, Carlos Santamarina, Dave Elton, Barbara Luke, Deborah Goodings and Sarah Gassman

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: none

GUEST: Peter Smeallie, Geo-Council

MEETING COMMENCED AT 8:00 A.M. EST.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Jean-Louis Briaud and the Board expressed their appreciation to Dave Elton for a successful workshop in Atlanta!

2. GEOCOUNCIL

Peter Smeallie, executive director of GeoCouncil, reported on the status of GeoCouncil, an organization whose primary mission is advocacy for geotechnical engineering policy, research and development. GeoCouncil operates with funds from members (dues range from \$100-\$1000) and funds from FHWA and NSF. Barbara Luke reported that USUCGER has recently paid \$100 for GeoCouncil dues. GeoCouncil coordinates activities between the G-I, DFI, etc. to avoid meeting conflicts and also encourages joint meetings. GeoCouncil manages the NGES sites including the recently added CRREL cold regions site and the deep underground lab project. The GeoCouncil web page has recently been updated. Jean-Louis Briaud currently serves as the USUCGER representative to GeoCouncil.

Jean-Louis Briaud strongly requested that, in addition to having an executive director, the GeoCouncil form a board with a president. The board should meet regularly and the names and e-mail addresses of board members should be posted on the GeoCouncil web site to foster communication between the members and the board. Deborah Goodings requested that the GeoCouncil bylaws be posted on the web site.

Deborah Goodings requested information about using the CRREL NGES, in particular she wanted to know if non-U.S. citizens can use the site. Jean-Louis Briaud requested that a dues structure be set for use of all NGES.

Peter Smeallie stated that he would respond to USUCGER's questions and concerns as soon as possible and mentioned that GeoCouncil will be in better shape by the end of the year.

3. REIMBURSEMENTS/ATLANTA

The Board approved to reimburse USUCGER Board members for costs required to attend the board meeting in Atlanta that are over and above any stipends that were already due to workshop attendees. Expenses were estimated to be \$1750.

4. FREQUENCY OF USUCGER WORKSHOPS

The Board discussed how frequently the USUCGER workshops should be held. Jean-Louis Briaud took a vote at the Workshop with options of every 1 or 2 years. Two years was preferred. The main issue with frequency is cost to attend. Holding workshops on university campuses is one way to keep costs down. Carlos Santamarina requested at least a 3 year cycle to ensure that each workshop is meaningful. Untenured faculty appear to gain the most from the workshop. Jean-Louis Briaud will request a formal vote of the membership with options of 1, 2 or 3 years.

The Board also discussed the idea of holding a major USUCGER workshop every 4 to 5 years and add yearly ½ day workshops in conjunction with GeoInstitute meetings. Sessions should be titled: “USUCGER: ……………” Workshops should be held within the schedule of the conference to avoid additional costs associated with extra hotel stays, etc. Following the workshop would be an evening reception complete with heavy hors d’oeuvres, Geo-margaritas and auger swivel sticks.

The Board recommended that USUCGER organize sessions at GeoTrans (July 2004) and a ½ day meeting at GeoFrontiers (January 2005).

5. DUES/FINANCIAL INITIATIVES

Members must pay their dues prior to being reimbursed for the workshop.

Barbara Luke proposed to change the dues structure so that dues are proportional to the number of members at each university. With the current structure, smaller institutions are subsidizing the larger institutions. A new dues structure of \$25/person/year was proposed. University membership will still be retained. USUCGER operates on about \$9000 per year primarily from membership dues.

Barbara Luke suggested that the Board consider spending money for administration (for web page, etc). Dave Elton will check with Karen Henry to find out how much NAGS pays for their administrator.

Jean-Louis Briaud suggested that one way to generate revenue for USUCGER is to have exhibitors at our meetings. These may include geotechnical text book and software distributors, research equipment representatives and others with an academic flavor. The Board endorsed the idea of having exhibitors at our meetings. Other financial initiatives were discussed as well.

Deborah Goodings reported that Frank Townsend would like to see a lecture series organized where native speakers travel to developing countries. The Board agreed that this was a good idea. Barbara Luke suggested that this item should be charged to the

education committee for further discussion. Jean-Louis Briaud agreed to inform the committee of this charge.

5.5 WORKSHOP POST MORTEM

Dave Elton reported the following observations from the workshop: untenured faculty always come; long, frequent breaks are valuable; never hold a workshop at a major hotel (keep costs down); and there was a significant interest in education (changing the 'E' in USUCGER was a good idea).

Susan Burns suggested that the Board do something for Elaine Ridgway. The Board decided that Jean-Louis Briaud will write a thank you letter and send flowers.

Deborah Goodings noted that the research summary session didn't go well. Dave Elton noted that this was partially due to the long, rectangular shape of the room. Deborah Goodings suggested that non-board members be recruited to run some sessions at the next workshop. Sarah Gassman suggested bringing several graduate students to help out with tasks such as putting university 5 min. presentations onto laptops. She also suggested that instead of reimbursing participants for travel, pay for their hotel stay upfront. The Board agreed that we also need to find a way to engage senior faculty. Deborah Goodings noted that the heavy hors d'oeuvres in place of a banquet dinner was a good idea. Barbara Luke observed that it kept people around for the evening meetings. There were mixed reviews on the poster session. Carlos Santamarina commented that future workshops should include plenty of free time and that breakout sessions need more structure and substance. He noticed significant interactions between participants at the workshop. He also suggested that we should bring speakers from outside of geotechnical engineering (bio, nano, etc). Perhaps the next workshop should be held in the west. Overall, the Board agreed that the newly formed committees should assess the workshop.

6. INTERACTION WITH INDUSTRY

Carlos Santamarina commented that future workshops should include industry speakers with vision. He suggested David Height as an example. Susan Burns was concerned that junior faculty might receive the wrong message regarding interaction with industry given the academic reward structure.

7. WEB SITE

Susan Burns requested \$1500 for website management. The funds would be used at the discretion of the web manager. The Board approved the request. The Board confirmed that funds up to \$500 have been allocated to the treasurer to pay for student workers. The six major presentations from the workshop will be posted on the website as well as the summaries from the research and education breakout sessions.

8. E-MAIL

The Board agreed that the e-mail list is operating well and e-mails are being sent in moderation.

9. COMMITTEES

Two new committees were formed at the workshop: the Education Committee and the Research Committee. Beena Sukuraman was elected chair of the Education Committee and Dennis Hiltunen was elected chair of the Research Committee. Contact information for both chairs is as follows:

Chair of the USUCGER Education Committee

Beena Sukuraman, PhD
Associate Professor
Civil & Environmental Engineering
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028-1701
Tel: 856-256-5324
Fax: 856-256-5242
Email: sukuraman@rowan.edu

Chair of the USUCGER Research Committee

Dennis R. Hiltunen, PhD
Associate Professor
Civil Engineering
Pennsylvania State University
212 Sackett Building
University Park, PA 16802
Tel: 814-863-2936
Fax: 814-863-7304
Email: drh5@psu.edu

The Board agreed that forming the committees was a great idea. Jean-Louis Briaud proposed allocating funds for the committees. Carlos Santamarina suggested that at this point most of the committee initiatives can be done remotely. Jean-Louis Briaud noted the value of face to face time. The Board agreed to approve up to \$500 for incidental expenses.

10. AWARDS

The Board discussed developing new awards that exemplify USUCGER values. Ideas included: diversity, collaboration, research creativity, and research innovation. The Board agreed that more time is needed for discussion. Jean-Louis Briaud will add this item to the agenda of the next conference call.

11. COOPERATION WITH THE GEO-INSTITUTE

The Board discussed cooperation with the GI, in particular on initiatives related to the newly formed education and research committees. The Board agreed that USUCGER should not duplicate efforts. Jean-Louis Briaud was charged with keeping in contact with the GI liason, Sandra Houston.

12. MEMBERSHIP

Barbara Luke reiterated that **Universities** are members of USUCGER. She requested and received clarification that any geo-practitioners can join USUCGER as affiliates. She expressed concern about the membership structure: It is not clear what the criteria are for

being listed as “faculty” at a university, and currently the interpretation is very broad. It seems that the only interested group that is excluded from participation in the USUCGER listserv is students. The Board is considering charging industry and other non-academic entities a yearly fee to be an affiliate. A three part membership system: members (universities), affiliates (industry, non-academic) and sponsors (federal agencies) was suggested, however an administrator would be needed to handle this. Jean-Louis Briaud will add this item to the next meeting agenda.

13. TRB

Sarah Gassman announced that there will be a USUCGER sponsored Doctoral Workshop at the 2004 TRB Annual Meeting. There are currently 9 speakers scheduled to make presentations on various topics related to geotechnical engineering in transportation. Details are as follows:

Doctoral Student Research in Transportation Geotechnics
Transportation Research Board 83rd Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 11, 2004
2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Deborah Goodings noted that the Doctoral Workshops held for the past few years in conjunction with the TRB Annual Meeting in DC are useful because PhD students get exposure, TRB gets new young members, and there is significant exposure for USUCGER. Last year approximately 25 people attended the session. The reception following the session was well attended. Several Board members agreed that it is a good experience and good exposure for USUCGER.

14. WOMEN’S WORKSHOP

Sarah Gassman reported that 18 geotechnical women faculty attended the NSF sponsored Workshop to Foster the Academic Development of Women in Geotechnical Engineering which was held on Oct 1st, the day prior to the workshop. Dave Elton commented that it was a good idea to piggy back one workshop with another to increase attendance at both workshops.

15. DFI

Jean-Louis Briaud reported that he has been working with DFI to define the terms of affiliation between USUCGER and DFI. A link to the DFI research needs will be posted on our web page. DFI will do the maintenance from their server.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 P.M. EST