

USUCGER Board Meeting
Geo-Congress 2012, Oakland Room, Oakland City Center, Oakland, CA
March 27, 2012,

Minutes

Attending Board Members: Christopher Meehan, Ken Stokoe II, Amy Cerato, Tong Qiu, Edward Kavazanjian, Jeffrey Evans

Invited Guests: Anirban De, Andrea Welker, Robert Schweinfurth

Webmaster: Matthew Evans

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 AM.

The following transition issues are discussed:

- Ed K volunteered to serve as the official liaison between the USUCGER Board and the GeoCoalition. Ali (past chair of USUCGER Board) will continue to serve as a representative of USUCGER working with the GeoCoalition.
- Chris M is working with Marte Gutierrez on transferring the USUCGER bank accounts. We should make the USUCGER accounts more easily transferable in the future.

The following issues related to the role of USUCGER are discussed:

- The board discussed our functions as USUCGER. We currently have about 139 universities in our membership. Although we don't have much lobbying power, it doesn't hurt to try. Ed K will take a lead on that front.

The following financial issues are discussed:

- USUCGER currently has over \$37k in a checking account and over \$10k in a CD. The organization has a revenue of about \$10k per year from membership dues.
- Board members will be partially reimbursed for attending this board meeting. Several invited guest speakers will be reimbursed for their travel to attend the USUCGER workshop at Geo-Congress 2012.
- Ed K mentioned that to make our organization more sustainable, we should have cash reserve to cover all expenses for at least one year.
- Student support: We had three student travel grants last year at \$1500 each. To reduce cost we will have two travel grants this year. Unlike the student travel support provided by the Geo-Congress 2012 which only covers a small percentage of a student's travel

cost, the USUCGER student travel grants are full-ride support, covering all expenses. However, the USUCGER travel grants are very competitive. In order to better serve the majority of the graduate students attending and presenting at the Geo-Congress, we need to explore alternative means of support for attending students to help advance their careers. Ken S. suggests that we should ask students to see how they want to be supported through USUCGER. The board agrees with this suggestion.

The following issues related to USUCGER By-Laws are discussed:

- Webmaster: Our current webmaster, Matt Evans, is not a board member, but he has routinely attended board meetings. His knowledge about the organization as the webmaster has been very helpful. The by-laws should clearly state the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the webmaster. The by-laws should also state that it is a paid position (currently \$1500/year). This may potentially facilitate the transition between webmasters. However, Matt agrees to continue to serve as the webmaster in the foreseeable future. The board deems it unnecessary to have two webmasters and Matt will continue to be the only webmaster for USUCGER.
- Chris M proposes a new life-time membership with no membership fees. The intent is to honor those who have made significant contributions to geotechnical engineering research, education, and practice, and to better utilize their expertise in serving the community.
- Several board members have stayed over for another term without having an election. For example, Marte Gutierrez and Chris Baxter have been overdue for a long time. We need to have another election pretty soon to replace Amy C, Chris M, Jeff E and Ken S. However, the newly elected board members don't have much knowledge about the organization. Therefore, the board agrees to extend the terms to the end of 2013 to four current board members: Amy C, Chris M, Jeff E, and Ken S. The past president Ali M will declare it to our members to see if there are objections from our membership.
- The board will explore the possibility of revising the by-laws to increase the term length from three years to four years to have better continuity among board members. We need to have a ballot to get a vote from our membership on how to handle election, term length, and term limits.
- Amy C volunteered to draft a revised version of the by-laws to reflect the proposed changes. This draft will be reviewed by the board and voted on by our membership.

The following issues related to the upcoming workshop at Geo-Congress 2012 are discussed:

- The workshop has over 400 registered participants. The turnout is expected to be about 25 – 50%.
- The workshop will consist of a 100-minute session on research and a 100-minute session on education. The invited guest speakers include John Daniels, Rob Schweinfurth, Andrew Welker, Blaine Leonard, and Anirban De. The invited panelists will lead the discussions with workshop participants and synthesize recommendations to the USUCGER Board.
- Chris M proposes that a discussion on the fundamental mission of USUCGER be had during the workshop among our membership. The board agrees with this proposal.

The following issues related to a board meeting at Geo-Congress 2013 were discussed:

- We need to have regular annual board meetings at Geo-Congress conferences. Although it is difficult to pack more activities into Geo-Congress program, we need to have a slot in the program for future board meetings. The easiest way to achieve this is to get onto the Geo-Congress program template. We can have a 90-minute slot in the Sunday afternoon. For that time slot, we just need to compete with the committee chair workshop.
- The board will propose a 90-minute session on integrating research, practice, and education, which will be sponsored by an appropriate G-I committee to get on Geo-Congress 2013. CM will look into the details.
- If USUCGER is to organize another workshop at Geo-Congress 2013. Jeff E will be on sabbatical at Cambridge next year. The board would need to decide who will be in charge of the workshop so that the planning can be done sooner and the membership can be better served.

USUCGER currently has a large cash reserve. In order to utilize this resource to better serve our members, the following proposed activities are discussed:

Workshop in July, 2012 at Boston

- USUCGER will organize a one-day workshop in conjunction with the CMMI Grantee Conference in July, 2012 at Boston. This workshop is geared towards early-career members, including graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and young faculty members (assistant/associate professors). Jeff E has been in communication with Richard Fragaszy and NSF will (hopefully) provide funding for this workshop. Jeff E has submitted the first draft workshop activities to Rick F. The workshop activities will be circulated to get everybody's approval.

- Ken S proposes that we have discussions on “piggy bank project” that NSF could fund during the workshop. We need to create a profile of our current and upcoming projects that people can collaborate on. Jeff E proposes that Glenn Rix presents “piggy bank projects”. The board agrees.
- NSF will fund the participation of early career people (approximately 50). USUCGER may contribute funding to the workshop as well.
- We need to extend this workshop to our broad membership given the exclusive nature of the CMMI Grantee Conference. The board will send a note to our members to bring this workshop to their attention so that they can arrange their travel early.

Funding for Special Projects

- USUCGER will have an open-call for competition on special projects, with a cap on the budget to be around \$5000. The board nominated Ed K to draft a call for proposal with examples of the projects we look for. For example, a video library of various geotechnical engineering phenomena and practices, which are of interest to geotechnical teaching and research, would serve the membership well.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM.