



National Conference on Women in Engineering 2014
Delegation Reports



Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
November 14-16, 2014

12 January 2015

As the VP External of the Lassonde Engineering Society for the 2014-2015 year, it was my pleasure to select and send out two delegates for the first time as a society to the National Conference for Women in Engineering (NCWiE) hosted by the University of Saskatchewan. This annual conference is organised by the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students (CFES) to actively address the issue of diversity and the under representation of women in engineering.

This year's theme for NCWiE was 'Level the Playing Field,' which focused on the goal of looking at everyone and saying that every person is diverse – whether it is because of gender, race, or ability. By attending this conference, students not only had an increased understanding of the issues women encounter in engineering and ways to appropriately address them, but students also had networking opportunities with talented members within the engineering profession.

As the Lassonde Engineering Society (and all other universities across Ontario) is a part of the Engineering Student Societies' Council of Ontario (ESSCO) and CFES, these student run conferences are invaluable and amazing experiences for any students that attend. These organisations and conferences serve as a way to bond, exchange knowledge, and have a unified voice across engineering schools in Canada.

The biggest challenge in attending these conferences is in attaining funding. As a society, we are truly thankful for the Lassonde School of Engineering for being our sole provider of funds ever since our initiation. Although we did not receive the full amount required to cover the costs, the rest of the costs came out of my personal pocket. I see this situation as a personal investment in the delegates I selected to attend this conference and as a learning experience regarding how Lassonde's funding policies work and to book flights ahead of time. This situation could have been prevented by submitting a full year list of conferences and their budget at the start of the year; however, some cases are unavoidable due to the timing and how well prepared the organisers for these conferences are for the year. I am proud that I was able to have at least two delegates attend – sending only one delegate and staying within budget would not have been effective. Even with two delegates, the wealth of information and networking opportunities was overwhelming for our students and it was recommended that more than two students attend. It is customary to see other universities sending five or more delegates (fully subsidised) to these student held conferences; however, these schools have a larger budget and Lassonde is still in its infancy.

To that end, enclosed are the delegation reports of their experiences. In terms of what I have asked them to write, I wanted to keep it open to the delegates such that they may have wanted to write on a certain topic learnt from the conference and delve into further discussion. These were written with the intent to be published as a blog post on the Lassonde Engineering Society website and further hope it can be placed onto Lassonde's official website once they are finalised. There are further talks with the students regarding doing a presentation on a conference related topic to their liking such that those that could not attend can learn first-hand from those that did. I hope that this can become reality within the upcoming weeks before the bulk of midterms occur.

Regards,



Tonny Lay
3rd Year Computer Engineering & International Development Studies
Vice-President External 2014-2015, Lassonde Engineering Society

List of Attendees:



Tangeena Islam
2nd Year Space Engineering



Duy Tran
4th Year Geomatics Engineering

Tangeena Islam: Delegation Report

Trip Overview

The entire purpose of the trip I took on November 14th-16th was to collect information the conference had to deliver and share it with my fellow peers and students.

The conference was called NCWiE, National Conference for Women in Engineering. The three day event was held by the University of Saskatchewan and it was a fantastic experience, filled with interesting people from various universities across Canada, amazing speakers, and beneficial information that we can all benefit from. The schedule of the event will be posted online.

Airport to Hotel

The event started off with a tour, but due to the late flight, we couldn't make it. Right off from the airport, we began to hit it off with the students from UBC and UoO. The hotel was eloquent and after settling down in our hotel rooms, Duy, the other representative from York University, and I decided to divide and conquer. We spread out to cover as much ground and information we could. We split up who would go to the various lectures as well, as they had two or three occurring simultaneously, amounting to about 8 to 12 lectures a day.

Lecture Overview

These lectures had everything from Rhetoric to Mat/Pat leave, and especially discussions involving Visible and Invisible minorities. The entire conference was centered around that topic. The glass ceiling (explicit) to how employers behave with female employees verses male, or a minority verses a majority in all forms from race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. (implicit) were all mentioned at the conference. I have notes gathered from all the lectures I took part in as a way to bring a piece of the conference home to benefit those at York and the Lassonde School of Engineering. These notes will be uploaded and presented on the blog Tonny, Lassonde Engineering Society's VP External, plans to make as well as any form of distribution of the information gained at the conference.

Minority Discussion

After lectures, we had breaks in which we could interact with the students from other universities. On the first night, we were sorted into various tables for dinner and were able to talk to a representative of a group of interest, i.e. APEGS, or Engineers Canada, or a local company, etc. I had a great time as our table talked about controversial topics regarding the effects on women in the workplace. The representative told us about her story and we talked about the derogatory views of minorities in society. This was beneficial to me as I am a minority in race, religion, and gender. I believe that such open discussions will allow students at York to become more adjusted and comfortable at university. They would be able to relate and find a place of belonging. As diversity is a major player in our university, I believe it would be good to act upon these forms of discussion.

Scavenger Hunt and Roommates

We were whisked away to the University of Saskatchewan for a scavenger hunt. In this we had to participate with our table-mates from dinner to complete a set of tasks as we developed our communication and interpersonal skills. The most memorable of the tasks included curling, an extremely difficult sport that requires focus, strategy, and power; the string laser mission, in which we had to get through a sky bridge covered in red string simulating a room of lasers and get through it without touching the strings; and the image charade, in which we had to communicate with our teammates to guess the right image and display it on a certain floor of their building. We got to learn more about the university and their traditions, as well as build friendships and connections.

After the tiring day, we came back to our hotel and met our roommates. The entire experience of the day left me tired, excited, and anticipating the next day. It was an extremely enjoyable day and it prepared us for the next two days of information.

Saturday Lectures

The first day began with a lecture by Corey Owen on Rhetoric. Followed by Negotiation Tactics by Jeanie Wills, and Building Resumes with two presenters whose names I could not catch.

During lunch, we had a career fair in which I met with various representatives from local companies in Saskatchewan, APEGS, Engineers Canada, Shell, etc. From the representative of APEGS, I was told the requirements to becoming a PE, Professional Engineer. I learned about the Law and Ethics exam, the 4 years of experience and so on. More information can be found on the blog or on their website and that of PEO, Professional Engineers Ontario. I also received the business card of the Engineers Canada representative and was told that she would be honored to come speak to the students at Lassonde about their organization and what they offer Engineers and Engineering students. Her information will be located on the blog as well.

After lunch, I attended the lectures of Visible vs. Invisible Minorities, and Aboriginal Enhancement. All notes will be posted to on the blog or attached to this overview.

Saturday Events

There was a very formal dinner at the neighbouring hotel, as well as a dance afterwards. Since it was the last night of the conference, many people had a great time as they sported fancy wear and had fun with their new friends. I chatted with a girl from Western University and took pictures and such with other students. It was a night to unwind and let our minds be fresh for the following day of lectures before departure.

A highlight of Saturday night for me was the 2am coffee run I had with my friend from Windsor. We bonded over many things and in the end, we ended up trading SWAG from our respective universities. I received their patch and a bandana.

Sunday Lectures

Sunday lectures included Mat/Pat leave by a couple who are both Engineers and graduates from UoS, Diversity Scholarships and Admissions, and Mentors & Friends. More information is attached or on the blog site.

Grant Imahara

Grant Imahara was an actor in the show Myth Busters. He is also an Engineer. He was a very inspiring speaker who told us of his story and his climb to the top after graduation. He also spoke on how important our roles as Engineers was and how we must be able to express ourselves to the public and teach them what we know. In his show, Myth Busters, he had fun creating various things to test myths and in this way, also exposed the world to the Engineering field. It was an amazing experience to be able to meet him and even take a picture with him.

Departure

Before leaving, we said our farewells to the people we befriended in a short time. We exchanged our SWAG with that of University of Windsor and Ottawa. At last, Duy and I went down to the river and took a few pictures with it. We knew we'd miss the view and the beauty of this region.

Soon after we left for the airport and, with Ryerson and McGill University, boarded the plane home.

Overall Reflection

I had a great time at the event. I felt it was very well planned and coordinated. I recommend people to go there not only for the content of the lectures but for the benefits of networking with companies and organizations as well as build bonds with other universities for the long run.

Duy Tran: Delegation Report

Hi everyone,

Lassonde Engineering Society sent two (myself and Tangeena) delegates to the National Conference on Women in Engineering. Just to have a little background of myself, my name is Duy Tran. I am a senior Geomatics Student and for the past three years I have worked in various Geomatics jobs. I have worked for York as an RA, field tech and analysis at RP-E and MMM Group traveling across Canada. I have been to dozens of conferences as a program representative, volunteered, and managed other local conferences and career fairs.

Our journey to NCWIE started with the flight that took us about six hours to get there, this includes a three hour layover in Winnipeg. Boy was it a cold place to be, not to mention a smaller airport compared to Pearson. Having the pleasure to be up in the air again, gives me the time to reflect on whether I left something that I should have brought. I always seem to forget something every time I fly. I'll eventually find out at the end of the trip.

As we arrived in Saskatoon, just like Winnipeg, the airport was considerably smaller than Pearson (for obvious reasons). At the time, the temperature was about -20 Celsius, but we had a warm greeting by the local engineering student from Saskatoon. We also ran into several other schools upon the way: Western, Ottawa and others I could not remember. While waiting for a taxi, as delegates Tangeena and I wanted to build a rapport with the students there just so we can get to know them. We came to find out that it seems most if not all of the other engineering schools sent up to six delegates of all years and streams which was a little intimidating being that we were the lowest number. All the delegates that we spoke to were very excited for this conference as it was on a national level where we would meet students from other provinces, this got us a little more pumped up. We ended up sharing a taxi with a few students from Ottawa to the hotel.



Figure 1 – Delegate bag

Upon arrival, we pulled up to the Sheraton Caviller hotel downtown Saskatoon. Checked in, got our lovely delegate package and room card and prepped for dinner. Not knowingly at the time I shared the room with three other delegates from the University of Alberta and Western. Now this was the fun part, the way they had dinner was unique in a sense where you didn't get to sit with your schools delegates, well the odds were against us seeing that there was only two of us.

Your seating arrangement was set, you look your name up on the board, find a number and voila you know which table you're at. But wait there's more! Each table had upwards of three female technical experts that work in the professional industry (female to male 85/15 split). The reason why I found this fascinating was not because of gender, it forced the student's hand to start using what is known as your "elevator pitch" selling yourself, school and find out a little of what they do. There is a possibility that you can gain an insight to your potential future. This was especially hard for me because there was a buffet style dinner and I was really hungry. To eat or not to eat, that is my question.

Being at a table of 6+ other delegates you also wanted to get to know everyone at the table. It was a great networking experience. The delegates at my table, I was able to talk to a few of them as somehow the topic of being in cadets came up. It helped build a nostalgic moment for all of us, while we tried to describe what it was like with the other students. Not to mention we also did our "elevator pitch" to each other. Majority of the delegates at my table were seniors but one.

The funniest thing that happened to me at that table, is when after a few speeches were made, they kept saying the word "Nc-Wee". I ask a question at the table inquiring "what in the world is this word NcWee that why speak of?" Everyone at the table laughed as they explain that it is where we are at, I still didn't get it until they mention N-C-W-I-E is pronounced as a word. Quite an embarrassing moment. There was several events planned out for us so after the meal ended, we got into our teams established by our table numbers for the "Amazing Race" located on University of Saskatchewan campus. Similar to the Geo-Hunt ran by the Geomatics club at York, we ran from location to location mapped out to completing tasks.



Figure 2 – Curling with the Team and pool party
Myself, Victoria, Pierre, Susan

Day 2 started with several key note speakers and also other several split talk shops. At this point delegate from each schools went to their respective talks. I took notes upon each talk made which where all great! This is where the schools with 3+ delegates would have been able to cover all the talks. I personally went to;

Negotiation Tactics,	Work place culture
Cultural Communications	Equal opportunity vs. outcome
Gender physics	Female friendly curriculum
Positive space	

Each topics will be talked about in their respective sections on a different paper, as this one describes my experience.

	Friday November 14th		Saturday November 15th			Sunday November 16th		
	Center Room	Starlight Room	Starlight Room	Top of the Inn	South West Room	South West Room	Center Room	East Room
7:00			Breakfast			Breakfast		
7:30			Keynote: Professional Communication Corey Owen			Keynote: Changing the World Roger Garriock		
8:00			Break			Break		
8:30			Communicating with Kids	Negotiation Tactics	Leadership Communication	Mat/Pat Leave	Planning NCWIE / CDE	Workplace Culture
9:00			Coffee Break			Coffee Break		
9:30			Conference Bidding 101	Building Resumes	Cultural Communication	Diversity Scholarships & Admissions		Equal Opportunity vs. Outcome
10:00	Registration		Career Fair Conference Foyer		Lunch	Lunch		
10:30			Keynote: Gender Physics Ruth-Anne Heezle			Mentors & Friends		Female Friendly Curriculum
11:00			Visible vs. Invisible Minorities	Gender Physics		Midafternoon Break		
11:30			Midafternoon Break			Keynote: Grant Imahara		
12:00	Welcome Luncheon - Top of the Inn		Positive Space	Aboriginal Engagement Sponsored by PCS		Sponsored by College of Engineering		
12:30			Banquet Prep			Farewell Notes		
1:00			Cocktail Hour Delta Bessborough with Condition One					
1:30	Transportation		Partner Banquet Sponsored by PCS					
2:00			After Party					
2:30	Tours	Registration						
3:00								
3:30								
4:00								
4:30	Transportation							
5:00	Networking Dinner Center Room							
5:30								
6:00	Sponsored by Graham							
6:30								
7:00	Transportation							
7:30								
8:00								
8:30	Evening Event							
9:00								
9:30								
10:00	Transportation							
10:30								
11:00	Pool Party	Movie Night						
11:30								

Figure 3 – Schedule

After a day full of workshops and speakers, it was time to relax eat and enjoy ourselves. There was a very nice banquet ready for us. Our dinner layout was similar to the first night where we had industry representative sitting at our table, however the location was different (across the street). It was nice as to it was a dinner and dance. Afterwards few of us left early, changed out of our dresses and suits to head out to other local establishment. Great way to explore the city and hang out with your new found friends.

The start of the third and final day was a dreadful one, as we all knew it was the final day and the end to a great weekend. Our schedule still continued as expected however what slipped our mind was our final keynote speaker. We all had the opportunity to meet and listen to Grant Imahara, a cast member on Mythbusters. His speech explained how Mythbuster worked, and how he was really the only Engineer on the team. Grant also mentioned how, although no one else had the technical experience, each member on that show had the drive and love to explore myths and well blow thing up. This is what the fans loved about the show, a group of people that explored their curiosity.



*Figure 4 – our table group meeting Grant Imahara
Susan, Myself, Grant, Jisoo, Pierre*

After the talk everyone went back to their rooms, packed and said our goodbyes. I saw everyone laughing, smiling and exchanging contact information (Facebook) but after that event, till this date the most of us still stay in contact and message each other once in a while. If someone were to have asked me whether I would do this event again, given the opportunity of course I would. Why not? Free trip to a different province meet, learn, and build close relationship with new found friends. I find that this event opened my eyes on the topic at hand, not only personal knowledge but teach and inspire others/lead our generation to a gender neutral industry. Not to mention a great way to advertise. On a side note, I caught the flu after this event #Worth.