

Appendix 8: Board Level Committee Progress Report: SYMPG

Comité de haut niveau du Conseil Rapport d'étape: SYMPG

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ABSTRACT: The Student and Young Member Presidential Group (SYMPG) was initiated in 2009 by the 2009-2013 ISSMGE President, Professor Jean-Louis Briaud. It consists of 18 members from 6 regions (3 from each region) who were nominated by the regional Vice Presidents of ISSMGE based on their interest and involvement in the ISSMGE and their national societies. The mission of the SYMPG is to increase the attractiveness of the ISSMGE for the next generation of geotechnical engineers and get more students and younger members (S/YM) involved in their professional family. Over the four year term of the the first group of SYMPG members, many products were implemented, including development of a web-based survey, the new "Outstanding Young Geotechnical Engineer Award", a database of known international and regional younger member events, unlimited corresponding members on technical committees for younger members, and inclusion of young member events at the 19ICSMGE, among others.

RÉSUMÉ : Le Groupe présidentielle étudiants et les jeunes membres (SYMPG) a été lancé en 2009 par l'2009-2013 ISSMGE Président, le Professeur Jean-Louis Briaud. Il se compose de 18 membres provenant de six régions (3 par région), qui ont été nommés par les vice-présidents régionaux de ISSMGE en fonction de leur intérêt et leur implication dans la ISSMGE et leurs sociétés nationales. La mission de l'SYMPG est d'accroître l'attractivité de la ISSMGE pour la prochaine génération d'ingénieurs géotechniques et obtenir plus d'étudiants et de jeunes membres (S / YM) impliqués dans leur famille professionnelle. Au cours de la période de quatre ans du premier groupe de membres SYMPG, de nombreux produits ont été mis en œuvre, y compris le développement d'un sondage en ligne, la nouvelle "Ingénieur prix Outstanding Young géotechnique", une base de données des événements connus de membres plus jeunes internationales et régionales, illimité membres des comités techniques pour les membres les plus jeunes, et l'inclusion des jeunes événements des membres à la 19ICSMGE, entre autres correspondant.

KEYWORDS: students, young members, SYMPG, BLC

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Student and Young Member Presidential Group (SYMPG) was initiated in 2009 as an ISSMGE Board Level Committee (BLC) by the 2009-2013 ISSMGE President, Professor Jean-Louis Briaud. The mission of the SYMPG is to increase the attractiveness of the ISSMGE for the next generation of geotechnical engineers and get more students and younger members (S/YM) involved in their professional family. This is accomplished through the cooperation and exchange of ideas from students and younger members across the world.

2 MEMBERSHIP

The SYMPG includes 18 members from 6 regions (3 from each region) who were nominated by the regional Vice Presidents of ISSMGE based on their interest and involvement in the ISSMGE and their national societies. The term of reference for the original members was four years; however, note that SYMPG membership has changed throughout its term, with 5 of the original members either resigning or being removed due to inactivity. They were subsequently replaced with corresponding members from the same region, nominated by SYMPG leadership and approved by the Regional Vice President. The final list of SYMPG membership as of 2013 is (in alphabetical order):

- Felix AYEHE, Ghana
- Mahnoosh BIGLARI, Iran
- Joost BREEDEVELD, Netherlands
- Lucy COE, New Zealand
- Colin DICKSON, Australia

- Leonardo DORADOR, Chile
- Silvia GARCIA, Mexico
- Trevor GREEN, South Africa
- Marcelo HEIDEMANN, Brazil
- Erdin IBRAIM, UK
- Daniel JIRÁSKO, Czech Republic
- Young-Hoon JUNG, Korea
- Xiaojun LI, China
- Marcos MONTORO, Argentina
- Jennifer NICKS, USA
- Imen SAID, Tunisia
- Brendan SCOTT, Australia
- Yonghui SONG, USA

2.1 SYMPG Leadership

Professor Jean-Louis Briaud appointed Jennifer Nicks as the Chair of the SYMPG. Elections within the group determined the other members of the SYMPG leadership team. Mahnoosh Biglari was selected as Vice-Chair and Silvia Garcia was selected as Secretary. Meetings were held via internet phone services and correspondence occurred via e-mail. The first face-to-face meeting for the SYMPG was on August 30, 2013 before the iYGEC and ICSMGE events.

2.2 Corresponding Members

In addition to the full members, the SYMPG also has many more corresponding members from around the world. There are 77 corresponding members total; 8 from Africa, 13 from Asia, 5 from Australasia, 39 from Europe, 5 from North America, and 7

from South America. Corresponding members are kept informed of the work and progress of the SYMPG and can contribute accordingly, but are not allowed to formally vote on any initiatives.

Based on the activity level of the corresponding members, there is the opportunity for them to be nominated for full membership when a position opens up on the SYMPG. Out of the 18 full SYMPG members at the end of the 2013 term, 5 were formerly corresponding members. This helps provide some incentive to join the corresponding members group. While the SYMPG is limited to 18 full members, the number of corresponding members is unlimited.

3 TASKS

To begin, each member and corresponding member was asked to provide three ideas that they thought would help achieve the SYMPG mission. Ideas were grouped and then ranked by the members, with the four top high priorities moving forward initially. Subgroups were developed to handle each of these tasks. Each subgroup consisted of 3-5 SYMPG members working towards the defined goal based on an established statement of work. Upon completion or resolution of each task, additional tasks were added based on the priority list established.

The following are the tasks that the SYMPG undertook throughout the course of the past four years:

- 1) Improve the ISSMGE website: The work involved identifying website issues related to content, functionality, and ease of use communication and providing suggestions to improve them.
- 2) Improve communication between the ISSMGE and younger members: The work involved identifying methods to improve communication between the ISSMGE and students and young members in order to attract them to society activities.
- 3) Increase TC involvement for young members: The work involved identifying ways to increase the involvement of young ISSMGE members in various activities of the ISSMGE Technical Committees.
- 4) Create S/YM Membership: The work involved establishing a separate student and young professional (SYP) membership classification within ISSMGE.
- 5) Improve knowledge of and consistency for young geotechnical engineers' conferences (YGECs): The work involved refining the current guidelines for organization of iYGECs, and developing standard guidelines for regional YGECs.
- 6) Develop motivation mechanisms: The work involved identifying and implementing mechanisms to motivate and increase participation of young members in the ISSMGE.
- 7) Develop student and young member activities at the ISSMGE quadrennial conference: The work involved designing competitions and networking opportunities for students and young members at the quadrennial International Conference for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ICSMGE).
- 8) Collaborate with industry/academia: The work involved identifying devices to bridge the gap between industry and academia. (Ongoing)

In addition, a second call for initiatives was performed at the end of 2012 to generate new ideas; members and corresponding members contributed. From this list, three general categories were identified:

- 1) Financial support: The work will involve identifying sponsorship opportunities to provide support and assistance for S/YMs to attend rYGECs and iYGECs.
- 2) Advertising: The work will involve developing mechanisms to highlight S/YM activities within

ISSMGE, such as a SYMPG webinar, forum on GeoWorld, YM Bulletin, etc.

- 3) Science Divulgarion: The work will involve creating and establishing an International Journal for YM to provide access for YMs to publish and bridge the gap between research and practice.

Because of the time limitations with the terms of reference, it was decided by the SYMPG to wait on these new initiatives until the next group of SYMPG members began their term in 2013; however, because it is different membership with different ideas, the list is subject to change.

4 PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Seven of the eight initial tasks have been completed or retired based on Board feedback. The following deliverables and results were achieved, in order of Tasks from Section 3, above:

- 1) Two liaisons from the SYMPG to the IDC were named to ensure that student/young member (S/YM) interests were represented and included in developments of GeoWorld. In addition, a specific SYMPG page was created on GeoWorld.
- 2) A web-based survey of young members (and potential future members) from different parts of the world was developed and will be uploaded to GeoWorld. The aim of this survey is to determine how (and/or if) current young members of the ISSMGE are receiving information from the ISSMGE; changes or improvements that young members would like to see; what can be done to attract more younger members; and determine what percentage of youth in member societies are active ISSMGE members. In addition, a flyer was developed outlining the SYMPG.
- 3) The ISSMGE instituted the grade of corresponding members for each TC with unlimited participation from YMs.
- 4) A survey of member societies was completed and recommendations were submitted to the Board for a S/YM classification; however, the idea could not move forward within ISSMGE since it is a society of societies, not individual members (only national societies can have SYP designations). As such, the task was retired.
- 5) A database of known iYGECs and rYGECs was developed. In addition, updated iYGEC and new rYGEC guidelines were drafted and submitted to the Board for approval. A minimum of bi-annual rYGECs was given with Board help needed to encourage member societies. The Board approved the recommendation to have additional representatives, up to three, nominated by the regional VP for rYGECs.
- 6) A new YM award was developed: "Outstanding Young Geotechnical Engineer Award." The first award will be presented at the 18th ICSMGE in Paris, France.
- 7) A proposal on a S/YM competition was presented along with networking opportunities (e.g. CAPG/SYMPG meet-and-greet, S/YM reception, career fair, etc.) for the quadrennial conferences. Due to the time constraints for the 18th ICSMGE, each of the three potential candidates for the 19th ICSMGE was contacted with our proposal; all are including S/YM activities in their own proposals.
- 8) Communication with the CAPG president on proposed methods to collaborate with industry and academia has occurred. Work continues on this task,

which will likely be rolled into the new initiative on science divulgation.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANS

Because of the success of the SYMPG in developing tangible products and increasing awareness of the ISSMGE to students and young members, it is recommended that the incoming elected President and Board continue to support this group. A new rotation of leadership and membership is suggested to generate renewed interest and enthusiasm. Members can be selected from the current corresponding member list or developed during the 5th iYGEC, subject to approval from the regional VPs.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The SYMPG would like to acknowledge Professor Jean-Louis Briaud for having the vision and leadership to create a new group centered on student and young member involvement. In addition, the SYMPG is grateful for the work of the Regional Vice Presidents in identifying and nominating great members. The members of the Board have also been very helpful in providing feedback on our work and giving us a clear direction. As Chair, I am especially thankful for all of the members and corresponding members that volunteered their time to serve on the group and contribute to the ISSMGE.