

Los Angeles Section

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Yazdan Emrani, P.E.
Los Angeles Section President



MENTORING: DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

"So, where do you see yourself in five years?" Not too long ago, this was one of the most common questions asked in a job interview. These days although we are coming out of the one of the worst recessions in history, the job market for civil engineers is still soft. Although most companies are getting busier, this is still an employer's market. And although there are good jobs available, with the right set of qualifications and experience, the most common theme employers are looking for are how flexible you are technically and how much of a multi-faceted and multi-tasker you are.

However, there is an additional set of hires which is favored by many companies these days. In many cases, talented and multi-faceted engineers are not leaving their current positions so companies have turned into "growing their own". Internship is the favored method of recruitment. These are recently graduated civil engineers or civil engineers with limited experience that due to the soft job market jump at the chance to "intern" with a consulting firm or public agency. This could be a "win-win". The companies hire talented young engineers at a very reasonable price, while interns get to work on a multitude of projects, learning how to design or put a set of plan and specs together.

But what happens after we hire these engineers and bring them on board? Do they get any training or mentoring or are they expected to basically hit the ground running and produce those wonderful plans and specifications that our profession is famous for? In recent years, unfortunately, the answer has been the latter.

Lack of mentorship and training programs are probably one of the biggest factors in de-motivating Civil Engineers, especially the younger ones. So how do we address this situation? With the current economic climate, companies are careful to hire just enough people to get the work done but can still keep their heads above water. In many cases mentoring is the equivalent of on-the-job-training with asking a few questions in between getting the final product out the door.

On the other side, engineers are tempted to improve their career. If you are not looking to move up in your career and are happy with the work you are doing, then the answer is simple to the question I asked earlier. Chances are though, that if you are encountering this question in an interview situation, or even during your annual review, you are looking to move up and improve your career. Chances are also good that you are looking to move into a leadership position or if you are already working in a leadership position, you want to build on it and move into a more senior leadership position. So where do you see yourself in five years? Do you want to be a Project Manager? How about a Department or a Division Manager? What about a City Engineer or Public Works Director? Regardless of what your ideal career path or position is, the question you should ask yourself is how do I get the skills I need to achieve my desired career goal. Our technical education is extremely important, and we need to keep at it on a lifelong basis. But lifelong learning applies to more than technical issues. To become a leader, we also need to develop "people skills"; the ability to relate well to other people, and

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Students Rock the Pacific Southwest Conference

by Larry Pierce, P.E., M.ASCE, ASCE Region 9 Governor (San Diego Section) & Jeniene Knight M.ASCE, San Diego Section Director and 2014 PSWC Advisor



What a fantastic year for our student chapters! This year's Pacific Southwest Conference was hosted by San Diego State University under the direction of

Amanda Corbett S.M.ASCE, Carly Scott S.M.ASCE, PSWC Advisor – Jeniene Knight M.ASCE, Faculty Advisor – Dr. Janusz Supernak LM.ASCE, Miguel Gonzalez (SDSU President, S.M.ASCE) and Ramzy DeCastro (SDSU Past President, E.I.T. S.M.ASCE), and Mark Webb M.ASCE. Student members increased their professional growth and strengthened their bond within ASCE. What made this conference unique was a strong outpour of support from other professional societies and unifying student chapters from Region 8 & 9 with special networking and fun ice breaker sessions like **ASCE's Got Talent!**

We are truly grateful for the support and hard work from our SDSU student members, the San Diego Section and YMF, and Region 9 Board of Governors. Larry Pierce and Mark Norton, Region 9 Board of Governors, participated as Steel Bridge Competition Judges and spoke to many students about ASCE. Larry Pierce and Jeniene Knight also promoted ASCE and member benefits at the Employment Fair. San Diego Section Officers - Tim Shell, Steve Fitzwilliam, Mark Webb, Mark Hill all participated and supported in the many activities at PSWC. The PSWC kick-off of events and concrete canoe races were highlighted by local news media. The San Diego Section will be presenting a special plaque at the 25th Annual Awards Banquet to San Diego State University as the **Outstanding Student Chapter** for their exemplary work hosting the 2014 Pacific Southwest Conference. The Section will also honor student members, Amanda Corbett from SDSU and Shaina Nocum from UCSD, as this year's Outstanding Civil Engineering Student

Award. Their service and dedication to ASCE are exceptional.

What's shaking at the University of California, San Diego? UCSD's Seismic Outreach Program is a one-of-a-kind educational and hands-on program for 6th graders. The program, run by Minh Nguyen (UCSD student director) and UCSD student members, has over 1,500 6th grade participants. They learn earthquake engineering basics, form teams to design and construct structures using K'Nex, and test their structures on a mini-shake table at UCSD. The Seismic Outreach Program is expanding to other student chapters throughout Region 9 by Colin Haynes (program founder, UCSD Doctoral Student) and Scott Ouellette (UCSD Doctoral Student).

Our 2014 Charles A. Smith Scholarship award winners were Kimberly Bowes (UCSD S.M.ASCE) and Kaitlyn Heid (SDSU S.M.ASCE, Vice President External, PSWC Committee). Congratulations to our Student Chapter Presidents, Miguel Gonzalez (SDSU) and Jackrin Vipatapat (UCSD), and all of our student members for a successful year! We look forward to their continued growth within ASCE.



PSWC: SDSU Student Chapter



PSWC: UCSD Student Chapter

especially to communicate effectively, in writing and orally. We need to learn team-building skills, develop our business skills, and improve our networking abilities. Sounds pretty straightforward, but how are we supposed to learn these great skills? There are several ways of learning these skills. We can read books, or take classes related to these subjects. We can also turn to a mentor that can help us with some or all of these skills. But, how do you select a good mentor? Some companies and municipalities have a formal mentoring program and in other organizations, there is an informal mentoring process.

Both can be improved. More than ever before, we need to raise the bar on the practice of mentoring by creating a mentoring culture. A mentoring culture continuously focuses on building the mentoring capacity, competence, and capability of the organization. A mentoring culture encourages the practice of mentoring excellence by continuously creating readiness for mentoring within the organization, facilitating multiple mentoring opportunities, and building in support mechanisms to ensure individual and organizational mentoring success. In a mentoring culture, there are several traits that need to be present to strengthen this program. When each trait is consistently present, the mentoring culture is fuller and more robust. As more and more of these mentoring traits are found in an organization, the mentoring culture becomes progressively more sustainable.

Some of these include: **Accountability**; Accountability enhances performance and produces long-lasting results. It requires shared intention, responsibility and ownership, a commitment to action and consistency of practice. Accountability also involves very specific tasks such as setting goals, clarifying expectations, defining roles and responsibilities, monitoring progress and measuring results, gathering feedback, and formulating action goals. **Configuration**; Configuration focuses on the consistency of mentoring practices within an institution's culture. It builds on the assumption that mentoring initiatives are tied to goals larger than just initiating a program. A shared understanding and vocabulary of mentoring practice exists that fits naturally with the organization's values, practices, mission, and goals. **Communication**; Communication is fundamental to achieving mentoring excellence and positive mentoring results.

Its effects are far-reaching; it increases trust, strengthens relationships, and helps align organizations. It creates value, visibility and demand for mentoring. It is also the catalyst for developing mentoring readiness, generating learning opportunities, and providing mentoring support within an organization. **Value and Visibility**; Sharing personal mentoring stories, role modeling, reward, recognition, and celebration are high leverage activities that create and sustain value and visibility. Leaders who talk about formative mentoring experience, share best practices, and promote and support mentoring by their own example add to the value proposition for mentoring. But the bottom line is that mentoring is about relationships. And one of the keys to the relationship is to ensure that it is based on respect and a mutual belief that supports an individual's learning and career growth.

But, what makes a good mentor?

Well, for starters, someone who can devote the necessary time. Someone who is patient and a nurturer, as well as very knowledgeable. They also need to be a good communicator and great listener, and a person whom is able to provide positive and constructive feedback. A commitment to developing others to be the best that they can be

is also needed. ASCE places a great deal of emphasis on mentoring and encourages the development of formal mentoring programs. I have had many discussions with my ASCE colleagues over the years in terms of philosophies and attitudes towards mentoring programs. What I have found is that a lot of my contemporaries had gone through mostly informal mentoring programs in their careers. I also found that these folks would be very interested in a more structured way of sharing their knowledge and expertise with the next generation of engineers. Members of the ASCE Committee on Professional Practice - Committee on Career Development have prepared mentoring guidelines to summarize information on mentoring programs and to familiarize civil engineers with the benefits of mentoring. I'll briefly cover the highlights in the following sections. ASCE divides the mentoring process into three key areas, namely the role of the Company, the role of the Mentor, and the role of the Mentee or Protégé.

First let's look at the roles and responsibilities of the employer. The Employer needs to provide a professional work environment that is stable, rewarding, and stimulating. The employer needs to support and enable participants with time and resources, train mentors on expectations and effective techniques, maintain confidentiality and establish, implement, monitor, and improve the performance of the mentoring procedures. The next area is the role of the mentor. **The Mentor** needs to build a trusting relationship, establish ground rules, accept the protégé for who they are, commit the time and energy to serve as a mentor, be supportive, realistic, honest, and encouraging and build confidence in his/her protégé. The mentor also needs to maintain confidentiality and open lines of communication, be respectful of the protégé's social and cultural environment, give feedback about the mentoring program to the employer, advise the protégé on career paths and technical development opportunities, provide the protégé with constructive information and feedback, and recommend the protégé for challenging opportunities within the organization.

Finally, the role of **The Protégé**, according to ASCE is to develop a trusting relationship, assess development needs and goals, demonstrate an interest in his/her career growth, identify and explore various opportunities, develop a mentoring plan with his/her mentor including time, frequency, duration, and place, and be honest about facts and feelings. Additionally, the protégé needs to listen carefully, be flexible and open minded, be willing to give feedback about the mentoring program, learn from the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of the mentor, and last but not least show appreciation.

A mentoring culture is a great expression of an organization's vitality. Its presence enables an organization to augment learning, maximize time and effort, and better utilize its resources. The relationship skills learned through mentoring benefit relationships throughout the organization; as these relationships deepen, people feel more connected to the organization. Ultimately, the learning that results creates value for the entire organization. I am a strong believer in the mentoring process. It works even if it is through an informal process. I encourage you to learn about your organization's mentoring program. Even if your organization does not have a formal program, talk to a colleague or a supervisor and see if they are interested in being your mentor. Similarly if you are an experienced engineer or manager, consider becoming a mentor and devoting some of your time in helping train the next generation of leaders at your organization. I know you will find the experience fulfilling and rewarding.

State Investments and Legislative Update

by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate



Water Bonds

Assembly Member Rendon (D-Lakewood) has amended one of his bond bills – AB 1331 – to specify that the one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) for groundwater shall be available “for grants for treatment and remediation activities that prevent or reduce the contamination of groundwater that serves as a source of drinking water.” Still missing is language some members insist being included including “continuously appropriating water storage funding.” This language is in [AB 2043](#) (Bigelow R-O’Neals) that was passed by the Assembly Water Committee at the end of April. Rendon’s other water bond – [AB 2554](#) – includes this language in an \$8.5 billion package that includes \$3 billion for water storage. Also moving is Assembly member Perea’s (D-Fresno) AB 2686 a \$9.25 billion version of the water bond; [SB 1250](#) (Hueso D-San Diego) and [SB 1370](#) (Galgiani D-Stockton) were heard in committee but not approved. Undoubtedly, the various bills will be sent to a conference committee to iron out the differences so something can appear on the November ballot.

BDCP

[AB 1671](#) (Frazier D-Oakley) requires legislative authorization for any facilities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) that would move water from new north Delta intakes by tunnel to the State Water Project (SWP) or Federal Central Valley Project (CVP). The bill was set for its first hearing but was cancelled.

Fracking

Three bills were acted upon this month. [AB 2420](#) (Nazarian D-Sherman Oaks) allows a city or county to adopt and enforce a local ordinance prohibiting well stimulation treatments. [SB 1132](#) (Mitchell D-Los Angeles) expands the scope of the independent scientific study to evaluate the risks and impacts of well stimulation techniques and related activities. This includes an evaluation of offshore well stimulation sites, human health risks, economic costs, disadvantaged communities, pipeline infrastructure, and emergency response. The bill prohibits further well stimulation treatments until the independent scientific study is complete and has been reviewed by a committee composed of a representative from the Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, CARB, SWRCB, and Department of Public Health. [SB 1281](#) (Pavley D-Agoura Hills) would reiterate and revise state policy on water use in the oil and gas fields and expand upon monthly reporting requirements.

Groundwater

[AB 1739](#) (Dickenson D-Sacramento) requires sustainable groundwater management in all groundwater subbasins determined by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to be at medium to high risk of significant economic, social and environmental impacts due to an unsustainable and chronic pattern of groundwater extractions exceeding the ability of the surface water supplies to replenish the subbasin. [SB 1168](#) (Pavley) would enact the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and would state as the intent of the Legislature

that, among other things, all groundwater basins and subbasins shall be managed sustainably by local entities pursuant to an adopted sustainable groundwater management plan. This bill would authorize unspecified entities to develop a sustainable groundwater management plan, defined as a document that describes the activities intended to be included in a groundwater management program, to be developed and adopted to encompass an entire basin or subbasin in an unspecified manner, and according to an unspecified schedule.

HSR

[AB 2650](#) (Conway R-Tulare) was killed in the Transportation Committee – it would place a referendum on the ballot to repeal the California High-Speed Rail Authority bonds.

Project Delivery

The Assembly Transportation Committee approved [AB 1724](#) (Frazier) that authorizes regional transportation agencies (RTAs) to use an alternative procurement method referred to as construction manager/general contractor (CMGC) contracts.

Water Conservation

[AB 2636](#) (Gatto D-Los Angeles) would establish the CalConserve Water Use Efficiency Revolving Fund and provide that the moneys in the fund are available to the Department of Water Resources, for water use efficiency projects. This fund would be used for at-or-below market interest rate loans and would permit the department to enter into agreements with local governments or investor-owned utilities that provide water or recycled water service to provide loans. The bill, because of its cost – is on suspense.

The Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee approved the chair’s [SB 1259](#) (Pavley D-) that authorizes DWR to initiate investigations and gather data as needed to study the loss of storage capacity behind dams resulting from siltation. The results of any siltation study would be reflected in the quinquennial update of the California Water Plan.

Recent Reports

PublicCEO issued a [primer](#) on the California drought. They found “the 2013-14 water year will probably end up being in the range of the third to fifth driest year in more than 90 years of recordkeeping. Because the previous two years were also quite dry, the state’s largest reservoirs are at about 50 percent of their average storage for this time of year. A few more inches could fall in the remainder of this water year.”

Department of Water Resources releases [2013 FloodSAFE California Annual Report](#), outlines key accomplishments of various flood planning and preparedness programs as well as an overview of its investments of public funds.

Environment California has released [Shining Cities: At the Forefront of America’s Solar Energy Revolution](#), finds Los Angeles ranks first among major cities in the nation for total amount of installed solar power and that San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, and Sacramento join LA in the top 20.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office has released [The 2014-15 Budget: Maintaining Education Facilities in California](#), recommends the Legislature require educational facilities in California to “develop plans that detail how much they set aside annually for scheduled

maintenance, how they plan to eliminate their existing deferred maintenance backlogs over the next several years, and how they plan to avoid creating new backlogs thereafter.”

Californians Against Higher Oil Taxes, a coalition of business, taxpayer, and petroleum industry groups, releases Oil and Gas in California: The Industry and Its Economic Contribution in 2012, findings include “petroleum industry contributes greatly to California’s economy by paying \$21.6 billion in state and local taxes and by directly employing more than 188,000 Californians.”

UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies has released Cost-Effectiveness of Reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emissions from California High-Speed Rail and Urban Transportation Projects. “As California establishes its greenhouse gas emissions cap-and-trade program and considers options for using the new revenues produced under the program, the public and decision-makers have access to tenuous information on the relative cost-effectiveness of passenger transportation investment options. In a step toward closing this knowledge gap, we compare the cost-effectiveness of greenhouse

gas reductions forecast to come to California High-Speed Rail with those estimated from recent urban transportation projects (specifically light rail, bus rapid transit, and bicycling) in California. The goal of the study is to link life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions estimates with full cost accounting to better understand the benefits of cap-and-trade investments.”

Appointments

The Governor has made the following appointments:

To Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy: **Michael Eaton** (reappointed), Galt, owner of Kingbird Farms.

To Western States Water Council: **Betty Olson** (reappointed), Trabuco Canyon, professor of civil and environmental engineering at the UC Irvine Henry Samueli School of Engineering.

To Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum and to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council: **William Hasencamp**, Los Angeles, manager of Colorado River resources at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

ARTICLE

Orange County New Faces of Civil Engineering Attend Outstanding Project and Leaders (OPAL) Gala and Annual Legislative Fly-In to Nation’s Capital

by Ravi Shah and Kimberly Gee

On March 20th, 2014, Kimberly Gee and Ravi Shah attended the OPAL Awards Gala in Arlington, VA near our nation’s capital. In conjunction with the OPAL Awards Gala, Ravi Shah attended the 14th Annual Legislative Fly-In in Washington D.C. from March 18th-20th. For those not familiar with the Legislative Fly-In and the OPAL Awards Gala, here is a brief synopsis of both these events.

ASCE Government Relations rallied nearly 200 individuals from across the nation to participate in a Fly-In at our nation’s capital. California was able to send the largest delegation with nearly twenty Region 9 ASCE members. Those in attendance learned about public policy issues affecting our profession and how we can contribute to the legislative process before setting off to meet with our elected officials. The two topics we focused on were the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and Surface Transportation Program (MAP-21) Reauthorization. The key messages being: The Highway Trust Fund will be insolvent later this year and a long-term, sustainable revenue solution is needed to keep America competitive; and urging Congress to pass a final conference report on the WRDA. In addition to the training of current issues, ASCE members were treated with the opportunity to hear Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx speak about the importance of a long term solution for Transportation Funding. For those interested in becoming involved with LA Section’s Legislative efforts, contact Legislative Activities Chair, Julia Moye.

The 15th Annual OPAL Awards Gala, a black-tie event, is held yearly to honor the achievement of Civil Engineering Leaders who have designed and built the world’s most recognized and important infrastructure systems. As recipients of the 2014 New Faces of Civil Engineering, Kimberly Gee and Ravi Shah were among the guest, which included industry leaders within Civil Engineering from throughout the nation.

The night began with a welcome and introductions from ASCE President Randy Over and Executive Director Pat Natale. Each project and leader that was awarded throughout the evening truly demonstrated advancement within the Civil Engineering profession. Of the five finalist, this year’s Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement (OCEA) Award went to The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barrier the largest civil works design-built project in the US Army Corps of Engineers history. Read more about it here: <http://blogs.asce.org/the-inner-harbor-navigation-canal-surge-barrier-wins-the-2014-ocea-award-2/>

In addition to being able to attend the Awards Gala, we were both fortunate to be paired with guides for the evening which included ASCE leaders, Jennifer Epp and Past President Blaine Leonard. It was an honor to be recognized among the eight other honorees of the 2014 New Faces of Engineering, which included recipients from the US and Australia. In addition to being able to attend the Awards Gala, we both had the opportunity to meet and interact with the other honorees whose work and personal achievement represent the bold and humanitarian future of Civil Engineering and while each of us were unique in our accomplishments, we all shared the same passion in promoting the civil engineering profession. This program, which is funded by the ASCE Foundation, celebrating its 20th year helped put on a fantastic event that neither of us will ever forget. We enjoyed meeting each and every one of the honorees along with many leaders of our industry. Ravi Shah and Kimberly Gee would like to Thank Los Angeles Section for their support and involvement!

If you’d like to check out the Bios of our two LA Section honorees and the rest of the honorees, please visit: <http://www.asce.org/Diversity/Diversity-Programs/New-Faces/2014-New-Faces-of-Civil-Engineering—Professional/>

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A Great Idea from the Life Members

The ASCE Life Members' Public Image Committee request that members take their (to be discarded) Civil Engineering magazines to their doctor's office or barber shop and merge them with the stack of magazines. We feel that this will be an effective way to make the general public more aware of what civil engineers do.

Reminder:

Copy deadline for the July 2014 issue is June 1, 2014; copy deadline for the August 2014 issue is July 1, 2014

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