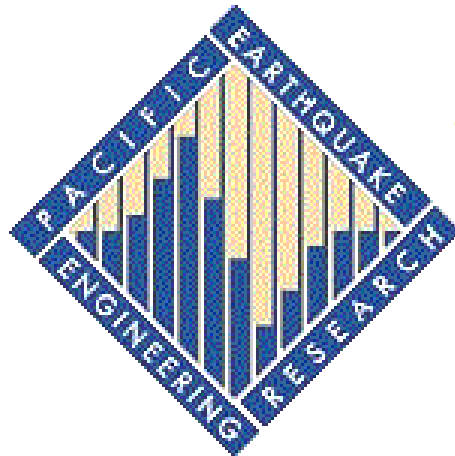


PEER Student Leadership Council

Meeting and Workshop Summary Report



**University of Washington
September 10-12 1999**

1. INTRODUCTION

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The first two meetings of the new PEER Student Leadership Council (SLC) were under very tight time limitations. It has been apparent that a meeting long enough to allow concentrated collaborative work on many topics previously identified as important by members of the SLC was needed. The workshop was organized to address this need.

The first goal of the weekend was to organize the SLC in a more permanent way. It was felt this was essential to the long-term effectiveness of the group because all student organizations are transient and institutional memory can easily be lost. We felt strongly that by developing a well-defined structure for the student arm of PEER, a permanence would be established. Additionally, members of the SLC have been uncomfortable with the current exclusive nature of the SLC as *the* student organization. A more inclusive group in which all students interested in earthquake research could participate was deemed desirable by all. This proposed group, the PEER Student Association (PSA), is described later in this document.

The second goal of the weekend was to prioritize programs of interest to the SLC and develop short-term blueprints for their implementation. During the initial meeting of the weekend (Friday 1-3 PM) three programs were chosen for immediate implementation: (1) an outreach program to bring PEER student researchers into the new organization, (2) A mentoring program to assist undergraduate and new graduate students in successful research and study (3) A student day to be held the day prior to the start of the PEER annual meeting.

REPORT OUTLINE

This report documents the ideas and work developed during the weekend. It is broken into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Meeting agenda
3. Participants
4. Purpose and goals of the PSA and SLC
5. SLC/PSA organizational structure
6. PEER student day
7. Outreach program
8. Mentoring program
9. Additional/future items

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

This document is a result of the belief that all organizations (and especially those that rely on busy students) should have a good "paper trail" that will allow incoming leaders to get up to speed quickly with organizational history and use existing documents, tools and information effectively. Good recording of meeting and program information is a priority of the current leadership. We hope this will provide both a good foundation and example for future participants.

The Student Leadership Council would like to acknowledge the invaluable organizational assistance of Gina Ring, the gracious hosting of our group by Professors Arduino and Kramer, the encouragement and advice of Professor Pardoen, and the support of the PEER center.

2. MEETING AGENDA

FRIDAY

- 12:00-12:30 Welcome and introduction
- 12:30-1:00 Tour of the labs
- 1:00-2:00 Lunch and informal discussion of priorities
- 2:00-4:00 Clarifying organizational structure and general meeting
- 4:00-5:30 Annual Meeting Student Day development
- 5:30-6:00 Prioritizing activities for Saturday
- 6:00-10:00 Tour of Seattle and dinner

SATURDAY

- 9-9:30 Coffee and review of day's goals
- 9:30-12 Outreach program development
- 12-1:30 Lunch and informal outreach with undergraduates
- 1:30-3:00 Mentoring program development
- 4:00-5:30 Report finalization and wrap-up
- 5:30-9:00 BBQ with undergraduates*

SUNDAY

- Review of report and departure

* A 10-minute spiel on the SLC and the many ways students can be associated with PEER was given. The mentoring programs we are trying to set up (discussed later in the document) were also described. Several students took us up on an offer to be contacts/ mentors for students interested applying to next year's scholars program.

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4. PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE PSA AND SLC

While the need for a smaller and more manageable group of students that perform the leadership and liaison rolls within PEER is apparent, SLC members have had trouble with the idea of the council itself being the "student group". Rather, as noted in the introduction, a more inclusive group in which all students interested in earthquake research could participate was deemed desirable. This proposed group is the PEER Student Association (PSA). The PSA would be the primary PEER student group, while the SLC would be a small group within the PSA that acts as its governing body and mode of communication with PEER. The PSA would be open to not only PEER Researchers, but all students interested in earthquake related research.

The goals of the PSA would be the following:

- ◆ Assisting students with their research and/or study in earthquake engineering via programs and information
- ◆ Disseminating information about opportunities for research and study offered by the center
- ◆ Providing a way for all interested students to associate with the PEER center and keep updated on its activities
- ◆ Promoting interdisciplinary and cross-university understanding and communication
- ◆ Promoting the center and earthquake research to both the technical community and general public

In more fully developing the roll of the SLC within this new framework, we have attempted to remain true to the vision of the SLC as advisory group (as put forth by NSF), while also addressing the particular needs of students associated with the PEER center. The SLC will act as the governing and organizing body of the PSA and will follow the outline in the following section.

The role of the SLC will be the following:

- ◆ The SLC will act as the governing and organizing board of the PSA
- ◆ The SLC will act as the direct contact between the PSA and the PEER center
- ◆ The SLC will help the center in gaining student input and assistance as requested by the center
- ◆ The SLC will bring student concerns and ideas to the center leadership

5. SLC/PSA GUIDELINES

Proposed bylaws and policies for the SLC/PSA were outlined in Seattle and have since been more fully developed. They are attached to this document as an appendix (section 10). While the bylaws are in somewhat final form and are pending approval by the full council, the policies are under development and are attached only as a source of additional information. Below are the highlights of both documents.

SLC/PSA Guidelines: Any student working in an earthquake related field can be a member of the PSA. Each primary school will have one SLC representative. Students at associated schools could be members of the PSA and could elect a student to be a representative on the SLC. However, the PEER center would not be responsible for travel costs associated with students from associated schools. It is encouraged (and should later be required) that SLC members be at the institution they are representing for at least one year following their service on the SLC to serve as a resource for the new SLC representative. *Clearly, this will have to be a future goal as this would eliminate half the people at this meeting.*

SLC Representative Responsibilities:

- ◆ Attend SLC meetings (quarterly)
- ◆ Perform active promotion of PEER at their universities
- ◆ Provide a way (either through existing clubs such as ASCI, EERI, etc, or set up meetings if none exist) for students to give input in a group or one-on-one session. This is an effective method to get PEER information to the students and enables the representative to better help PEER address student needs.
- ◆ Represent PEER to the general public whenever possible

Note: The above will vary slightly depending on the school's existing programs and culture.

Special roles within the SLC:

- ◆ Secretary (Annie-until next meeting)
- ◆ Chair (Annie)
- ◆ Newsletter coordinator (Lelli)
- ◆ Mentoring coordinator (Christina/Tara)
- ◆ Outreach coordinator (Charley)
- ◆ Web coordinator (Ken)

The web coordinator has a special assignment as it is via this medium that many students will look for timely information. As the PEER center employs a webmaster, the web coordinator should provide complete drafts and information to the PEER webmaster who will implement the request. The Web coordinator should also confirm the timely completion of the request by the web master. Although the web coordinator is not responsible for producing most of the information, he/she is responsible for posting it on the web, actively requesting the necessary documentation and information, etc... Therefore, the web coordinator should have a tenacious personality and a file full of incriminating photographs (real or doctored) on each of the SLC representatives.

The following is a list of the items that should be maintained on the PEER student web site:

- ◆ Mentoring program information and contacts
- ◆ Student researcher information (school, research topic, and contact information)
- ◆ Information on the programs available for undergraduates
- ◆ Newsletters and meeting minutes
- ◆ Upcoming conferences and workshops
- ◆ Information on the PSA/SLC
- ◆ Links to other EERC sites
- ◆ A link to the NSF SLC site
- ◆ A link to the delphi forum with information on the forum's purpose and a contact for the password.

6. STUDENT DAY

Overview/Purpose: The Student Leadership Council is interested in hosting a one-day student only event to be held the day prior to and in conjunction with the PEER Annual Meeting. The principal activity on the schedule is the presentation of research among students. This will occur in two forms. First, each student will describe the purpose of their research as it pertains to the big picture of earthquake engineering and PEER in the form of very short presentations. Secondly, an opportunity for more detailed discussion will occur during a session for poster presentations. The posters will be the same as those presented at the annual meeting the next day. While this may seem redundant, in past poster sessions students tended to be busy answering questions about their own research, which limits the opportunity to view other posters. It is hoped that this additional time will allow for more roaming and discussion between students. In addition to the above, the proposed schedule also includes time dedicated to interaction, networking and socializing between students.

The main purpose of this proposed day is to provide an opportunity for interaction and learning between students. However, an added benefit will be the opportunity to familiarize students with the PEER center, the student association and the leadership council. As noted on the schedule below, outreach can be performed during the opening remarks, during the day via handouts and through informal networking.

Presentation Format: The proposed oral presentations are intended to highlight in a general format what the purpose of each student's research, and how it fits into the field of earthquake engineering. These presentations should be approximately 5 minutes in length and include little or no discussion of results. Talks should be general enough that students in other disciplines (structural, geotechnical or social science) can get something out of it.

The tentative schedule below is an attempt to give an idea of what the student day may entail. It is based on the assumption that approximately 30 students would make presentations, but will have to be revised as the PEER Annual Meeting approaches.

Tentative schedule:

- ◆ 8:30-9 Pick up packets/Coffee
- ◆ 9-10 Welcoming remarks and introduction of the PSA/SLC
- ◆ 10-12 5 Minute Presentations
- ◆ 12-1 Lunch
- ◆ 1-2 5 Minute Presentations and general discussion
- ◆ 2-4 Posters (for more detailed information on results)-same poster as next day
- ◆ 4-5 Discussion and wrap-up
- ◆ 5-8 BBQ

Packet should include:

- ◆ Agenda
- ◆ Research abstracts (the same as will be handed out the next day)
- ◆ Information about PSA/SLC
- ◆ Information about the PEER center
- ◆ Participant Directory

7. OUTREACH PROGRAM

Purpose: To inform students about the goals, resources, and current research of the PEER center and the PSA/SLC.

It should be noted that this very limited definition of outreach is a result of the meeting's focus on goals that can be achieved in the short-term. Later this program may be extended to include pre-college students, the general population, industry, etc. Currently, these are considered special projects and are included in the "Additional/future items" section.

Overview: The outreach coordinator is responsible for running the outreach program. Clearly, determining who this program should be reaching and how they can be reached is paramount to the success of the program and was the focus of our discussion. Questions that were discussed are outlined below with a summary of ensuing comments. We found that this is the most vexing of the topics discussed during this workshop. This program will require substantial future organizational effort.

(1) How do we find contact information on the graduate researchers and undergraduate scholars already involved with the PEER center?

Get information on the undergraduate scholars and summer interns from program coordinators. Get information on PEER fellows from the center. Try to get information on graduate students from the Principal Investigators (who's names we have). Collect names and emails whenever possible (meetings, etc.)

(2) How do we reach other students who have an interest in earthquake research?

Make announcements each semester in appropriate classes (ex: basic soil mechanics, structures, and relevant social science classes). Make announcements in student group meetings (ex: ASCE, EERI, etc)

(3) How should the mentoring and outreach programs be tied together?

This question can be better answered as both programs progress. This is a topic we need to continually address. The coordinators of these two projects should keep in close contact.

(4) How can we bring students of different disciplines and universities together?

Student day at the annual meeting. Trying to get students in the social sciences involved.

(5) How do we reach students in the social sciences? Do these students need special support? If so, how do we provide it? Is there a way we can encourage students in the social sciences to consider earthquake research?

Talk to professors that have PEER funding (if available at the institution) to find out which classes or organizations may be most appropriate for PEER students to visit and for any insight on the above questions.

(6) What is the best way to get information out?

Provide basic "spiel" and handouts that include information on PEER, the PSA and the web page for the representatives that are responsible for going into classes and meetings. Develop a great web site full of information, as discussed in the above section on the web coordinator. Send a newsletter to students whose names we have and to students in the Geotechnical and Structural engineering programs. The newsletter will likely include upcoming events, projects from a different highlighted school, the web page address, etc.

Outreach continued next page

Short term goals and activities include:

- (1) Send emails/letters (SASE) to the PIs, perhaps followed up with visits
- (2) Create a one page write-up entitled "What is the PSA/SLC" for use at PEER meetings
- (3) Make up handout and spiel for classroom presentations
- (4) Give spiel at student day (see above) & ask for a few minutes at start of general annual meeting
- (5) Set up web pages (web coordinator)
- (6) Help schools set up PEER seminar series. Some ideas include either biweekly presentations by students on PEER sponsored research projects or cross-disciplinary seminars (ala Berkeley's series last year). Of course food would have to be provided.

8. MENTORING PROGRAM

Purpose/Goal: The primary goal is to establish a mentoring system whereby students (preferably one of each discipline at each university) can answer general questions or can refer questions of a more technical nature. A secondary goal is to set up a program for potential and chosen PEER scholars and summer interns composed of past participants in the programs.

Short Term:

- ◆ Get undergraduate students who are willing to answer questions about the PEER programs they took part in. Their email addresses will be posted on the web along with background information about the program they were involved in.
- ◆ Set up a web page on the mentoring program. Include information for students interested in using the program as well as those interested in being mentors (include what is required of mentors and the goal of program).
- ◆ Recruit new mentors when appropriate and inform students of the mentoring program through outreach.

Long Term:

- ◆ Work with Dr. Whittaker to set up a mentoring program with industry (as further discussed in Section 9 below)
- ◆ Develop mentoring programs for high school students interested in earthquake engineering (maybe undergraduates would be better for this program)

Short Term activities include:

- (1) Talk to current PEER scholars about being mentors for next year (*Completed at this meeting*)
- (2) Pinpoint students who are willing to be mentors
- (3) Put together one page sheet explaining PEER, the SLC and the expected responsibilities of mentors
- (4) Post the mentors on the web
- (5) Support mixers where mentors and prospective earthquake engineers (graduate and undergraduate students from all disciplines) can get together. A little speech could be made at the beginning, the mentors could wear name-tags and a list of mentors would be available.
- (6) Ask for volunteers at the annual meeting

Special note: We are outlining this program based on current situation. We believe that this is a very important role that the SLC should be involved with, but wanted at this time to outline readily achievable and short-term goals. It is our hope that some additional long-term goals will be the priority of future SLC members.

9. ADDITIONAL\FUTURE ITEMS

Topics for Further Discussion

SLC ANNUAL RETREAT: This weekend-long meeting was very useful to us for several reasons. First it provided an extended period of time in which we could think and talk about issues of interest. Second, it allowed us the time to get the ideas on paper in a logical way that everyone could view and comment on. Third, it allowed for more personal interaction between representatives, which enhanced our working relationships. Lastly, because the goals of the organization were set and "bought into" by the people carrying the workload, the commitment to follow through was palpable. In future years, a long weekend would also provide ample time to get new members up to speed with the workings of the SLC and provide some incentive for active participation. We would, therefore like to make this weekend meeting an annual event to be held immediately after the members of the SLC change for the year. Timing of this change over will become clearer as the PSA develops into a working organization.

It was agreed that holding an annual meeting somewhere other than Richmond, CA was very beneficial to us and highly desirable for future meetings. Not only was the change in scenery good for the creative process, but the feeling that we were "on vacation" seemed to give us all a lot more energy than normal. Also, having the meeting somewhere interesting would encourage full participation by new members and would be a small perk for students, as discussed below. The term "retreat" is a reflection of this desire that the meeting be longer than normal and be held at different locations.

The idea of an annual retreat came not only from the positive experience of the Seattle meeting, but also from some brainstorming on how we could get responsible and creative student leaders to actively participate in the SLC. This discussion was prompted by the following observations: (1) a successful student organization requires both good programs and responsible students to lead the programs (2) students who are responsible and have leadership abilities are often targeted by many groups and are either stretched thin or actively limit their participation to a few activities, and (3) travel, even if it is on the cheap side, is a huge incentive to most students.

SPECIAL PROJECTS: Several special projects have been discussed in the SLC meetings that have taken place. We are herein referring to "special projects" as those that will either exist for a limited time or require cooperative effort with the PEER center. The SLC needs to further develop mechanisms for smoothly handling special projects. Currently, the best idea is to recruit a student that is not yet in one of the primary roles of the SLC (as defined in section 5) to head each of the projects.

Of the special projects discussed, only one has a concrete plan (though no leader as of yet). The goal of the project is to provide PEER with student input regarding the world-wide-web (or Internet) courses that are currently under development. The outline for this project is as follows:

1. PEER will provide interested students with copies of the courses to be offered.
2. These students will go through the courses and post comments and discussion in the student-only forum, which will allow for completely open communication.
3. Students will also be asked to provide input on other courses they would find beneficial.
4. The student leader of the project will provide PEER with a summary report of the comments and discussions from the forum.

Several other special projects that we discussed were the following:

1. Developing a series of presentations using the small shaking tables that will soon be available. These presentations could be developed for a range of audiences including middle school, high school and college students, as well as for civic leaders and the general public.
2. Assisting Prof. Whittaker in outreach to industry. We are interested in discussing ways the SLC can assist in outreach as the interaction between our partners in industry and our students can be of great benefit to both. One idea that we had was to sponsor a special day of some sort.
3. Setting up a long term program for outreach to middle and high schools and/or the community.
4. Assisting the PEER center in performing outreach to professors teaching public policy and other relevant social science courses. (It was felt that this is outside the scope of our current directive but is very important.)

SLC ANNUAL BUDGET: It was noted that as the PSA grows in the next few years, the need for an annual budget (and the addition of a treasurer) may become apparent.

Special Note

The goals we have set at this meeting are based on the size and scope of the student organization within PEER as it currently exists. We hope it is clear to future student leaders that may read this document that in no way does this document intend to limit student activities in the future. Nor does lack of comment on potential programs signify that they are either undoable or undesirable—we simply had to start somewhere.