PEER SLC Retreat Minutes

December 2, 2000

Submitted by Charles H. Hamilton

This meeting was held at the Surf and Sand Resort in Laguna Beach, CA. We discovered that reservations for a place in Monterey have to be placed more than a year in advance, so the August retreat fell through. In attendance were Charley Hamilton, Ayse Hortacsu, Tara Hutchinson, Allen Jones, Annie Kammerer, and Sandrine Lermitte.

The meeting was organized around addressing the issues from the previous SWOT analysis, and developing plans for the remaining six months of the term.

WEB COURSE MODULES

Steve Mahin’s module (UCB) is in use with his classes at UCB, and he feels he does not need SLC review and testing, especially with 50-odd reviewers on hand. Pedro Arduino’s module (UW) is nearly ready to test, and should be available in early January. Medhat Haroun’s module (UCI) is currently stalled. His laptop was stolen and he lost the only copy of the module with it. Let this be a lesson to all: backup, backup, backup! He does not have a firm date by which the module will be recovered. Maintain contact with Solomon Yim (OSU) who is the Education Committee program director for the course modules.

The questions we want to answer are:

- Ease of use
- Any bugs that exist
- Necessary background to pursue the courses (e.g. pre-requisite course material in differential equations for Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics module)
- Can they be effectively used by undergraduates? - Get undergrads to review them as well as grad students

Tasks: Create/locate a standard evaluation template for these course modules. Investigate the evaluation template developed for MAE at MIT.

TRILATERAL SLC MEETING

- Planned for EERI meeting in February.
- Will get funding from Education Committee again this year, but add to budget for next year

PSA INVOLVEMENT

Question: How can we motivate greater participation by PEER students? Answer: First we need to know who they are!

- How do we get word out to the SLC about who PEER students are? This year PEER requested names of student researchers on budget proposals, but this
information wasn’t easily available due to slow development of PEER student database. Other ways to solicit/store this information?
  - Phone callings/emails to PIs? Possibly too intrusive.
  - Posters at schools asking PEER-funded students to attend? Many students have evolving funding sources, and may not be funded or realize that they are funded by PEER until later than the posted event.
    - Developing closer ties with EERI (and/or ASCE and other groups) chapters on campus will improve awareness of PEER among student body.
      - ASCE more general than EERI, but attracts more undergrads. Want to reach undergrads who might not know of EERI or the existence of EERCs.
      - Other organizations more appropriate than EERI on some campuses
      - Improves ease of intercampus activities
      - Additional funding sources opened up for invited lecturers
      - Possibility to establish BIP lecturers/job fairs on PEER campuses
        - Job fairs sorely lacking in civil engineering fields (structural, geotechnical) as well as in public policy, although value of job fair for public policy unclear. We need a public policy person to comment on this
    - Use EESC and Interns to develop closer undergraduate ties/recruiting tool
    - Reimburse all costs associated with SLC activities: copy card, phone calls, publicity costs, etc.
    - Some advisors still a problem: discouraging students from participating. Will discuss specifics with PEER Headquarters to ascertain progress of their plans to assist with this problem.

Conclusion: Collecting student information and motivating faculty should be PEER’s responsibility, not the SLC’s. SLC can facilitate, but cannot be the driving force behind the task.

STUDENT DAY

- Have a “Lunch with Leaders”. Idea from NSF/ERC meeting in DC.
- Ken Joy from UC Davis to give a “How to Give a Talk” talk (Tara will contact)
- Hold on 27 January at RFS
  - Concerns about attendance since this is the day before the annual meeting
  - Late notice may reduce turnout as well.

University Consortium for Instructional Shake Tables (UCIST)

Tables are up and running at UCB and UCI. SLC deliverables need to be outlined by Education Committee in order for SLC to assist in completing experiments. MAE database is waiting on experiments completed by PEER to be submitted.

EERI COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Question: What would improve working conditions and success of the SLC at the various universities?

- UCLA – greater faculty support for student groups in general
- UCD – EERI student membership sponsorship, support for field trips
- Stanford – Needs EERI chapter or other focal point
- UCB – has good support from students, but needs more support from faculty
- UW – Energize faculty for EERI support, integrate structures and geotech groups, use GeoInstitute instead of EERI as the local coordinating organization
- UCI – more enthusiasm among graduate students (highly commuter campus), greater membership base in EERI, switching focus from EERI to ASCE

REU/INTERN JOURNAL

SLC is not generally in support of extended commitment of resources and effort necessary to develop and maintain a student journal. Suggested alternative: annual student paper competition

- Prizes for best paper - $1000 for best paper, gifts for next two prizes
- Awarded at PEER Annual Meeting
- Similar to EERI paper competition, but restricted to PEER researchers
- Formatting constraints need definition
- Check prize ideas with PEER Headquarters

BUDGETING ISSUES

- Add Trilateral SLC Meeting as separate budget item
- Additional funds for PSA activities at schools. Check on what restrictions appear on funding usage.
- Add line item for Student Day. 2000-2001 budget was submitted and approved before Student Day concept was developed.

PEER HEADQUARTERS

Students are still not receiving the Center Newsletter. Charley to talk to Darlene at HQ about getting newsletter out to students.

Idea was suggested to start a PEER Distinguished Lecturer series. PEER has a lot of very skilled and well-respected faculty members performing cutting-edge research. Develop fund, administered by SLC, to support travels of this lecturer to each PEER core and affiliate school. SLC would select the distinguished lecturer, since this lecturer is meant to speak primarily to the students.

Suggest to Education Committee that SLC gets a faculty mentor. Qualities should be:

- Past SLC involvement
- Position on Education Committee
- Enthusiastic young faculty member
- Suggest Abe Lynn (Calpoly) as first SLC mentor

NEXT MEETING: Student Day/PEER Annual Meeting, January 2001

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED: Progress on issues with PEER Headquarters, development of outreach activities