



International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering

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Message from the ISSMGE President

Dear colleagues,



Following my announcement of the presidential plan on Education, Innovation and Diversity in September 2017 in Seoul which was also published in the October issue of our Bulletin last year, I am delighted to report to you the significant progress we have made with the help and support of many board members such as Professors

Mounir Bouassida and Kok Kwang Phoon and board-level committee chairs including Ms Lucy Wu, Professors Pierre Delage and Dimitrios Zekkos, and Mr Sukumar Pathmanandavel.

1. Education

The proposed “ISSMGE virtual university” has begun to take shape. Under the leadership of Professors Mounir Bouassida and Kok Kwang Phoon, existing ISSMGE webinars were reviewed and categorised into three “themed series of webinars or postgraduate courses”. The themes are (a) Risk Mitigation, Monitoring & Observational Methods; (b) In Situ Testing; and (c) Earthquake Engineering. Each series is comprised of three to four webinars giving students and engineers up to five hours of viewing. Details will be announced on our ISSMGE website (under Education) by Professors Mounir Bouassida and Neil Taylor soon.

About nine other courses have been identified. However, there are gaps that need to be filled to form coherent courses with a total not less than five hours of viewing. All VPs and chairs of technical committees are encouraged to nominate webinar speakers. Moreover, “Lectures in French” will be developed.

Message from the ISSMGE President (Con't)

2. Innovation

The open access policy in the ISSMGE initiated by Professor Roger Frank during his presidential term has been continued and expanded. Naturally, the open access materials and information would form the “ISSMGE virtual library” as a part of the “ISSMGE virtual university”. Professors Dimitrios Zekkos and Kok Kwang Phoon have started to explore how best to create this “virtual library”. Even more exciting is that the Innovations and Development Committee has begun to explore the possibility of creating our own publisher, “ISSMGE virtual publisher,” for reviewing conferences and publishing papers online.

I am also very pleased to inform you that a new technical committee (TC) called TC309 – “Machine Learning and Big Data” has been created. The chair of this new TC is Dr Zhongqiang Liu from the Norwegian Geotechnical Society. The Vice-chair and Secretary are Dr Mohammad Rezanian from the United Kingdom and Dr Zenon Medina-Cetina from the United States, respectively. More details of this new TC can be found at <https://www.issmge.org/committees/technical-committees/impact-on-society/machine-learning>.

3. Diversity

Boosting Corporate Associates to narrow the gap between academics and practitioners

Under the leadership of Mr Sukumar Pathmanandavel, significant progress has been made since September 2017. Four new Corporate Associates were recruited. They are Geoharbour Group from China, GDS Instruments from Malaysia, AOSA SA, and SRK Consulting from Argentina. In addition, CAPG have been working closely with various conference organising committees to mobilise geotechnical engineers around the world to consider, debate and have dialogue on matters that directly impact the welfare of the profession. The main purpose is to narrow the gap between academics and practitioners to find shared meaning and understanding, as well as to take collaborative actions. Our mid-term focal points for this exercise are the forthcoming CAPG plenary session, and CAPG workshops, at the five 2019 Regional conferences of the ISSMGE. Topics for debate and dialogue are in the process of being finalised. More details of the significant progresses made can be found in the CAPG report published in this Bulletin.

Creating key lecturing opportunities for young members

As our young members (less than 36 years of age) have been under-represented in major lectures for many years, I have created the ISSMGE Bright Spark Lecture series to enable more young members to take the main stage at conferences. Thanks to the Young Members Presidential Group (YMPG) who came up with the title of this young members’ lecture series. The first Bright Spark Lecture was delivered by Dr Lin Dong at the 7th Technical Conference in Eastern Asia on Geo-Natural Disasters in Chengdu (China). I was very pleased to attend that lecture and present a certificate to the lecturer. The conference was organised by ATC3.

Other ISSMGE Bright Spark Lectures are being planned by the YMPG and various organising committees at different conferences such as the 7th International Conference on Unsaturated Soils, the 16th Asian Regional Conference and the 16th Pan-American Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering.

Under the leadership of Ms Lucy Wu, the YMPG has been increasing its reach via Google Groups, LinkedIn and GeoWorld. Also there have been increasing collaboration opportunities via the proposed CAPG-YMPG workshops, the ISSMGE Virtual University and the recently launched ISSMGE Bright Spark Lecture. The YMPG has planned to participate in more meetings via the Corresponding Member Forum, to encourage more Young Geotechnical Engineers Conferences at national or sub-regional level, to investigate the Road to Professional Registration and to seek ways to engage younger members in the committees of Member Societies.

Have a nice summer break.
Charles W.W. Ng



Dr Lin Dong from the Lanzhou Institute of Seismology of China Earthquake Administration receives the first “ISSMGE BRIGHT SPARK LECTURER” certificate