

AC 2007-1305: CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ASEE

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Campus Representative Activities that Promote Engagement and Active Participation in ASEE

Abstract

For the past several years, the author has been the recipient of several American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Campus Representative Awards, including, most faculty recruited and highest percentage of faculty recruited in the North Midwest Section. In 2006, the author received the Outstanding Zone Campus Representative Award (Zone III).

This paper describes some to the items and activities that the author has employed at both the campus level and the Section level related to the following key items:

- Recruitment of New Faculty.
- Retention of ASEE Members.
- Campus Rep Survey.
- Campus Rep Incentives
- Teaching Award Survey.

The ultimate goals of the above items are to increase “active” membership in ASEE, to improve the lines of communication between the Campus Reps and the local (institutional) ASEE members, and to solicit response from Section members related to ASEE activities.

Recruitment

One of the fundamental duties of any Campus Rep is to recruit new faculty (not restricted to only engineering faculty) for ASEE membership. The primary vehicle used by Campus Reps for recruiting new faculty is the Dean’s Program, which basically offers two (2) years of free membership in ASEE. Thus, recruiting new faculty by means of the Dean’s Program would seem to be a very simple and painless process. However, this is usually not the case. Campus Reps must exert some effort, sometimes great effort, in the recruiting process. As practiced by the author, the basic procedures for attaining one-hundred percent of new faculty recruits are outlined below.

1. Prior to the start of the Fall Semester, contact the Dean’s Office for a list of new engineering (or related field) faculty, including contact information.
2. During the first week or two of the semester, contact all new faculty via email, welcome them to campus, explain the benefits of ASEE membership, and invite them to participate in the Dean’s Program. Attach the Dean’s Program membership form to the email.
3. For non-respondents, follow up the initial email with a phone call or personal contact (or both).
4. Sometimes (often) second, third, and fourth email solicitations are needed.
5. If all else fails, schedule a meeting with the delinquent faculty members, bring hard copy of the application to their office, and complete the application, in person.

Retention

Another valuable contribution to ASEE of a Campus Rep is retention of members once the Dean's Program has expired (and for other lapsed members). The basic communication techniques, as described in the previous section, are all valid means of retaining ASEE membership, but are not always effective. One method of encouraging retention and increasing activity in ASEE programs is to offer a dues incentive program. Any given administrative unit can offer to reimburse faculty for ASEE dues and many do just that. However, this does relatively little for encouraging participation in ASEE programs or pedagogical activities. A similar, but philosophically different approach would be to offer faculty reimbursement for "active" ASEE membership. The definition of an active member, as used by the Department of Construction Management and Engineering at North Dakota State University is outlined below. On an annual basis, faculty must be involved in at least one of the following activities:

- Attendance at the annual ASEE North Midwest Section Conference.
- Attendance at the ASEE Annual Conference.
- Publication and presentation of a paper at the ASEE national or sectional conferences.
- Publication of a paper in the ASEE Journal of Engineering Education.
- Serve as an officer in ASEE at the Section, Zone, Division, or National level.
- Serve as the ASEE Campus Rep for the College of Engineering
- Feature Presenter at a North Dakota State University (NDSU) Pedagogical Luncheon.
- Develop and present a "teaching" workshop for NDSU faculty orientation.

Other incentives for involvement in ASEE and pedagogical activities, in general, can be found on the Campus Rep Annual Report form administered by ASEE. Some of the more successful methods used the author are listed below

- Promotion of membership through e-mail to every faculty member.
- Discussion of benefits of ASEE membership during a College of Engineering faculty meeting.
- Personal contact with current members, non-members, and lapsed members.
- Payment of participants' registration fees and travel expenses for ASEE meetings by Dean/Director/Department Chair.
- Memos and e-mails to all faculty regarding ASEE, regional and national meetings, to encourage both attendance and submission of papers.
- Publication of material relating to regional and national meetings.
- Luncheon meetings to discuss engineering education issues.
- Seminars/workshops for engineering faculty members to discuss their teaching methods.
- Attended and encouraged faculty to attend the ASEE Annual Conference.
- Personally visit non-member and lapsed member faculty.

Who is your Campus Rep?

A Campus Rep survey was recently conducted within the North Midwest Section of ASEE. The basic purpose of the survey was to measure the effectiveness of the Campus Rep Program and to allow respondents to offer some suggestions for improving the program and other activities and services offered by ASEE. One hundred and thirteen (113) members responded to the survey from a total of sixteen (16) institutions of higher learning. Section Table 1, Table 2, and Figure 1 present the results of the survey.

Table 1. Campus Rep Survey

QUESTIONS	RESPONSE	
	YES (# and %)	NO (# and %)
Do you know the name of your ASEE Campus Rep?	51 (45%)	62 (55%)
Within the last year, has your ASEE Campus Rep contacted you regarding ASEE activities?	42 (39%)	65 (61%)
Within the last two years, have you attended an ASEE Conference (Regional, National, or FIE)?	78 (66%)	40 (34%)
Survey Respondents = 113 Section Membership = 641 Response Rate = 17.6%		

Table 2. ASEE Activity Survey (tabular results)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	
	Level	# and %
How would you rate your activity level in ASEE on a scale of 1 to 5? (1 = no participation ... 5 = very active)	1	17 (15%)
	2	39 (34%)
	3	26 (22%)
	4	15 (13%)
	5	19 (16%)

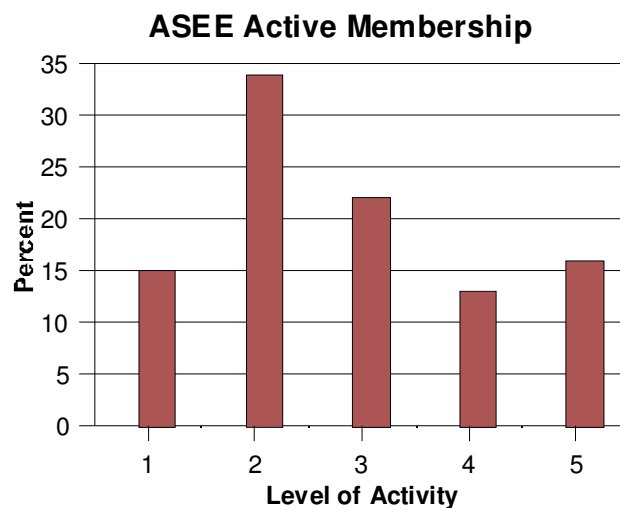


Figure 1. ASEE Activity Survey (graphic results)
Mean (2.83) SD (1.30)
(1 = no participation ... 5 = very active)

The survey results indicate that majority of respondents are fairly active in ASEE (51% are Level 3 or higher) and 78% have attended an ASEE conference within the previous two-year period. However, the Campus Rep Program does not seem to be performing adequately, as indicated in Table 1. Survey respondents were also asked for some suggestions for improvement of the Campus Rep Program (and other ASEE activities). More than fifty (50) text responses were submitted. Samples of the responses related to the Campus Rep Program are outlined below.

I didn't know we had a Campus Rep or that there was a Campus Rep Program (multiple responses).

Have the Campus Rep contact all local ASEE members at the institution and meet with them at least once a year to discuss participation in ASEE meetings and participation in ASEE, in general.

Campus Reps should strongly encourage attendance at both the regional and the national ASEE conferences.

Find a way to connect the Campus Rep with the college administration. The linkage here is somewhat tenuous. Perhaps there is a way to raise the prestige of the position.

We could have more frequent gatherings where we may discuss learning and teaching experiences and new research in this area. In some universities, there are one or more such activities every week.

Campus Representatives should have a central communication center (email list) to communicate what they are doing at their institutions.

I'm not sure if we have a Campus Rep. If we have one, they shouldn't be so shy! ASEE is terrific! The Chicago conference was wonderful.

More local academic meetings/seminars/workshops rather than only one annual meeting.

Automatically provide the contact information of the Campus Rep to all new members and the other way around. Sponsor an annual gathering of ASEE on campus to tell about their activities.

Make sure Campus Representatives are known, maybe on a web site.

Our Campus Rep should meet with the engineering departments to discuss what is going on at ASEE and with engineering education in general, but doesn't. I have no idea how this person was selected, but he does not seem to be very active or enthusiastic.

I have been the Campus Rep, by default, for a number of years. It has been a frustrating experience. Given that promotion and tenure depend on research, not teaching, ASEE's message is not the most saleable.

Who wants to be a Campus Rep?

A Campus Rep is appointed by the Dean (or other appropriately titled administrative head). It is the responsibility of the Dean to appoint someone who is: 1.) willing to serve as a Campus Rep, 2.) capable of performing the duties of a Campus Rep, and 3.) prepared to devote the required time to be an effective Campus Rep. Unfortunately, these three criteria are not always met. The responsibility of assuring that the Campus Rep is properly conducting his/her duties falls rests directly with the Dean. In order to have an effective Campus Rep program at any given institution, the Dean must periodically review the performance of the Campus Rep and offer suggestions to improve performance. The Dean may want to solicit input from ASEE members

at the institution regarding the performance of the Campus Rep. After the review, a change in Campus Reps may be warranted.

The position of Campus Rep is voluntary and often underappreciated. However, the Dean may want to offer some incentives that add some additional benefits to the position of Campus Rep which, in effect, could elevate the status of the local Campus Rep. For example, the Dean may offer to support all (or most) expenses related to attendance at the Sectional Conference or the ASEE Annual Meeting. Additional funding from the Dean could be used to support local pedagogical activities (luncheon seminars, teaching workshops, etc.) under the direction and administration of the Campus Rep. A set amount could be allocated annually for such activities. Basically, this would give the Campus Rep an annual budget. Within the college, the Dean could create a standing (or ad-hoc) ASEE committee, chaired by the Campus Rep, to develop and deliver local pedagogical programs and services. The net result is that the position of Campus Rep is recognized as an important aspect of the administrative network of the college and financially supported.

The Section must also take a lead role in promoting and providing a strong Campus Rep Program including (but not limited to) the following items:

- List all Section Campus Reps on the Section web site or in the Section newsletter.

- Sponsor a Campus Rep meeting (breakfast or lunch) at the Section Conference to discuss and share suggestions for improvement and Campus Rep activities, in general.

- Communicate with ASEE national to make sure Campus Rep list (and officer list) is up-to-date on the ASEE web site and the Section web site.

Teaching Award Survey

A survey was recently conducted related to a teaching award for the North Midwest Section. Two alternative draft versions of the teaching award were sent in advance to all Section members to allow time for review and reflective thought. Both alternatives are included in the Appendix. The first alternative would recognize faculty members who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to engineering or engineering technology education through outstanding classroom performance. This award is targeted at more experienced faculty. The second alternative would recognize new faculty (less than five years of teaching experience) who has demonstrated excellence in the classroom. The basic purpose of alternative two was to promote more participation and involvement by junior faculty at the annual Section conference. Respondents were asked if there is a need for a Section teaching award and to comment on each alternative and offer suggestions regarding the alternatives. Table 3 presents the results of the survey followed by comments related to the teaching award.

Table 3. Teaching Award Survey

QUESTION	RESPONSE	
	YES (# and %)	NO (# and %)
Do you think that the North Midwest Section should institute a Teaching Award?	36 (90%)	4 (10%)

Comments related to the institution of a teaching award, if the initial response was negative:

There is not enough interchange between institutions and faculty to allow for meaningful judgments regarding the merits of nominees.

It is difficult to evaluate or select the candidate for this teaching award. The best teacher normally does not want to show off. The teaching award usually goes to faculty who are related to the ASEE committee.

Already have too many awards!

Teaching awards seem to devolve into rewarding department heavyweights, not good teachers. Selection for "best teacher" is typically done by the department, or a departmental committee, without a lot of input from students. I'm not sure it's possible to get the awards to the really outstanding teachers.

Comments related to the teaching award(s).

I think that having teaching awards for junior faculty would be much more effective for multiple reasons. Dedicating time to teaching and education-related research is often discouraged at the assistant professor level, so teaching awards could provide great teaching motivation and reward for teaching efforts that typically go largely unrewarded by promotion, tenure and evaluation (PT&E) committees. I really think that junior faculty would benefit greatly from this little boost, as a reminder that teaching is important, and that someone out there really values their efforts. Otherwise, it is much too easy to become less motivated and more discouraged which can start one on the path of devoting much less time and effort to teaching.

I like the idea of a list of possible activities that the recipient could be involved in, but I disagree with setting a firm number. I think it should be left up to the selection committee to make the determination whether exemplary activity in one area is equivalent to lesser amounts of effort in 4 or more. Similarly, I think the initial paragraph under qualifications is too restrictive. No doubt a person who did everything well that is listed there should be deserving, but some of those activities may not be part of the faculty load at some institutions. I think a better phrasing would be something to the effect that, "...successful nominees will show exceptional dedication to engineering education through participation in a number of the following areas," or something to that effect.

Four of the six criteria may set a VERY HIGH bar for a new teacher award. The requirement for evidence of "outstanding classroom performance" is rather vague. What should be submitted? Course/Instructor evaluations? Peer reviews?

I like the idea of acknowledging teaching excellence. I do have some concerns on the proper ways to evaluate teaching and to nominate individuals. These are often time consuming and nebulous activities that are not understood. However, I do think the award is important and I especially like the free registration as part of the award to get people to the meetings.

I would like to see the eligibility of the award(s) be expanded so that they could include faculty from community colleges who teach in the engineering curriculum. Many college educators (4 year schools) may not realize that pre-engineering curricula cannot be ABET accredited, though many community colleges have

“pre” programs that satisfy degree requirements and are transferred to baccalaureate institutions. Also, there are some excellent community college programs in our Section.

I would like to see the Award for the “worker bees” who are doing a job with undergraduate students on a day by day basis. I think student input (direct, not the professor or course ratings) is important. There are enough awards around for “old folks” (and this is a 66 year-old opinion). Let’s recognize the “comer’s”, not the used to be’s”.

The required four of six criteria EMPHASIZE the WRONG and possibly IRRELEVANT qualities of an outstanding teacher. My best teachers may or may not have published instructional materials, may or may not have developed equipment, may or may not have contributed to facilities. None of these things are the POINT. Even if they did these things, these are not what made those teachers outstanding. The point is, are the students LEARNING from the teacher? That’s what makes an outstanding teacher. This list of criteria is really quite absurd, and I realize it has a lot in common with other award requirements. They are equally absurd. Give me a teacher who 1.) connects with students in a way that makes magic happen in a learning environment, 2.) asks students to give and give and give until they don’t think they can give any more and then asks them again and is received positively for it, 3.) asks for feedback, responds to it, gives feedback, responds to it, and 4.) isn’t afraid to change anything about their course when a change is an improvement. This list represents what is wrong with teaching in America. We have forgotten the STUDENTS. Why don’t you ask STUDENTS how they discern an outstanding teacher? I’ll bet not a single one of them lists any of these qualities in their top six. I’m proud to be a teacher. This award is currently structured for people who are proud to make the system happy. It would be AMAZING if we could be on the forefront of rewarding teachers for teaching. Then I would be incredibly proud of ASEE.

I think the teacher awards idea is great. However, the ability to do this in a fair and consistent way is difficult. My experience with these has been that it has become a sort of mutual admiration society between just a few schools and individuals.

Two things that are missing from qualifications in my opinion is the skill and interest to develop and implement new innovative styles of educational methods (such as active learning over lecturing) that increase student motivation and interest toward engineering...over 90% of our students go to industry and do not stay in academia, so these are important things to consider. The current list of criteria is very “academic and traditional”, so I would probably replace some of the existing qualification criteria. It’s important to encourage more of us to develop improve educational methods and styles.

Award must include the requirement that recipient(s) provide a teaching improvement track of sessions at the next Section Conference. Also, unclear why we negate ASEE members that teach in institutions that do not have ABET accredited programs. Doesn’t this project an elitist attitude? We have many such members in ASEE. I know of several instructors at smaller community colleges that teach physics in pre-engineering curriculum. Wouldn’t their unique styles be worthy of recognition? I think the wording of criteria is too old school focusing on teaching assignments. We need to recognize new pedagogical methods and their application to engineering.

Think award should not just be based on teaching performance, but on scholarship related to teaching that includes dissemination. Perhaps one award could be for teaching, another for research/scholarship in this area.

Conclusions

Recruitment, retention, and involvement are all dependent on effective communication and dissemination of information. The overall success of the Campus Rep Program is entirely dependent on the individual Campus Reps. Without a strong local Campus Rep, ASEE activities, including recruitment and retention, are severely hampered. Or alternatively, at the local level a “good” Campus Rep will increase participation and involvement in ASEE.

Overall, the Campus Rep program (at least within the North Midwest Section) is not performing up to expectations (as indicated in Table 1). ASEE (national) provides the information and resources for the Campus Rep Program, but a bottom-up strategy is what makes the program work. The key player is obviously the local Campus Rep, but the Dean plays an important role. The Dean selects the Campus Rep and is responsible for monitoring the local Campus Rep Program. If the Campus rep Program is not adequately performing, then this a direct reflection of the philosophical beliefs (related to teaching) or the administrative capabilities of the Dean. Unfortunately, if administration (at any institution) does not place value in ASEE membership or ASEE activities then an active and responsive Campus Rep program may not be possible. Only an extremely strong Campus Rep can function in an arena that lacks administrative support.

APPENDIX (DRAFT OUTLINES)

Alternative 1.) ASEE North Midwest Section Outstanding Teaching Award

Purpose

The Outstanding Teaching Award is intended to recognize faculty members who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to engineering or engineering technology education through outstanding classroom performance.

Award

The award includes a certificate and a \$? cash prize, which are presented at the Section Banquet.

Eligibility

Candidates must be an ASEE member and have been a full-time instructor or professor of an ABET/EAC or ABET/TAC curriculum.

Nomination

A colleague, department head, or student may nominate a candidate for this award.

Qualifications

The candidate must possess and be able to communicate a broad and accurate knowledge of his or her subject area, possess self-confidence, create a feeling of harmony between self and students, be able to meet difficulties with poise, possess a sense of proportion, stressing fundamentals and disregarding trivial details and give assignments that challenge students to think creatively. The candidate must demonstrate an intense interest and enthusiasm for his or her subject area and the learning process that motivates students to their fullest capacities. The candidate must participate in the advising process and counsel students before and after graduation. The successful candidate must possess a strong record of activity in ASEE and/or the educational activities of another professional society and attend the annual Section meeting at which the cash prize and certificate are presented. The candidate's contribution to the profession should include at least four of the following:

1. Participation in the development of courses or curricula;
2. Development of teaching equipment or development of a wider application of teaching equipment previously developed;
3. Contribution to the improvement of laboratories or other facilities;
4. Development or authorship of instructional materials or a text that enhances the student learning process;
5. Publication of original work, through any medium, that enhances the engineering education process or adds to the literature pertaining to teaching methodologies;
6. Service as a mentor to other teaching faculty or participation in the conduct of seminars and workshops that are focused on effective teaching and enhanced student learning.

Documentation

Applications must include evidence of outstanding classroom performance (i.e., descriptive text). Other evidence may include: individual letters of recommendation from current and former students, other documentation necessary to demonstrate the candidate's qualifications, an endorsement of the candidate's department head and/or dean and/or chief academic officer, standard institute administered course evaluations, a curriculum vita or resume.

Alternative 2.) ASEE North Midwest Section Outstanding New Teacher Award**Purpose**

The New Teacher Award is intended to recognize a faculty member who has less than five years of teaching experience and who has demonstrated excellence in the classroom.

Award *

The award includes a certificate and a \$? cash prize, which are presented at the Section Banquet.

Eligibility

Candidates must be an ASEE member and have been a full-time instructor or professor of an ABET/EAC or ABET/TAC curriculum for no more than five years.

Nomination

A colleague, department head, or student may nominate a candidate for this award.

Qualifications

The candidate must possess and be able to communicate a broad and accurate knowledge of his or her subject area, possess self-confidence, create a feeling of harmony between self and students, possess a sense of proportion, stressing fundamentals and disregarding trivial details and give assignments that challenge students to think creatively. The successful candidate must attend the annual Section meeting at which the cash prize and certificate are presented. The candidate's contribution to the profession should include at least four of the following:

1. participation in the development of courses or curricula;
2. development of teaching equipment or development of a wider application of teaching equipment previously developed;
3. contribution to the improvement of laboratories or other facilities;
4. development or authorship of instructional materials or a text that enhances the learning process;
5. publication of original work, through any medium, that enhances the engineering education process or adds to the literature pertaining to teaching methodologies;
6. service as a mentor to other teaching faculty or participation in the conduct of seminars and workshops that are focused on helping other teachers improve their classroom effectiveness.

Documentation

Applications must include evidence of outstanding classroom performance (i.e., descriptive text). Other evidence may include: individual letters of recommendation from current and former students, other documentation necessary to demonstrate the candidate's qualifications, an endorsement of the candidate's department head and/or dean and/or chief academic officer, standard institute course evaluations, a curriculum vita or resume.

* The full, or part of, the "award" could come in the form a fully paid travel grant to the Section Conference for the specific purpose of presenting a "teaching" workshop. Several "awards" could be presented each year which would result in several ancillary benefits, such as, an increase of conference attendance of "newer" faculty, an additional conference track would be developed that could increase interest in the conference, a vehicle for dissemination where practical methods of teaching effectiveness and enhanced student learning are presented. In addition, it is anticipated that many of these "new" faculty presentations will become part of the "Teaching Tips" section that will be posted on the Section web site.