

AC 2010-874: A HISTORY OF THE ASEE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ENGINEERING DIVISION: THE FIRST DECADE (2000-2010)

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A History of the ASEE Multidisciplinary Engineering Division: The First Decade (2000-2010)

Abstract

The ASEE Multidisciplinary Engineering Division can be traced back to a single member's initiative in late December 2000. From that initiative, the MULTI Division membership has grown to its rank as the fifth largest ASEE Division in 2010. At this ten-year mark, it seems appropriate to document this decade of development of the ASEE MULTI Division, as it is now known. This paper reviews the MULTI Division's development over its first decade with a record of the highlights of each year of that first decade and the steps that led from that initiative to recognition as an ASEE "constituent committee" in 2005 and then the Multidisciplinary Engineering Division in 2006. This initiative also contributed significantly to ASEE's current role in the ABET EAC accreditation process. MULTI is now the fifth largest division of ASEE.

Year 2001 and the ASEE Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, NM

The initiative that eventually led to the MULTI Division can be traced back to a widely distributed email contact in late 2000 and followed by a series of subsequent messages in early 2001 by an ASEE member, Dr. Joan Gosink, at that time a Colorado School of Mines professor and director of their Division of Engineering. She proposed that it would be valuable to have "those interested and/or involved in 'non-traditional engineering' programs" meet to share and discuss common problems," and that an ASEE conference was a natural base for such an exchange.

Based on a very enthusiastic response to those initial communications, and with help from some other engineering educators (notably Dr. Edwin C. Jones, Iowa State University), a special meeting was organized and was held through the cooperation and sponsorship of the Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) Division. Session 2332 Forum for Non-traditional Engineering Programs was held on June 26 at the 2001 ASEE Annual Conference for "those interested and/or involved in 'non-traditional engineering' programs."

With extensive promotion and Dr. Gosink's leadership, the attendance was good, with a recorded attendance of "30-31," representing nearly as many different institutions. Dr. Gosink moderated the discussion and Dr. Edwin Jones, Iowa State University, served as secretary pro tem. The discussion was lively, with considerable debate over the appropriate thrust and the leadership of the group. As its initial leadership, the group selected a steering committee comprising Dr. Gosink (chair), Dr. Dayne Aldridge, Mercer University, and Dr. Harry Cook, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with Dr. Jones serving temporarily as secretary.

The informal notes by Dr. Jones from that meeting reported the following:

“Preliminary work indicated that ABET lists about 78 ‘non-traditional’ engineering programs with titles that include Engineering, General Engineering, Engineering Science, Engineering Physics, Engineering Systems, and similar variations. Currently these programs lack the cohesiveness of a ‘parent organization.’ This meeting is to initiate the development of a forum for the department heads of ‘non-traditional programs.’ Our objectives include the delineation of the problems, solutions, and unique opportunities available to this community. We believe that ASEE provides a natural base for consideration of these issues.

“Those present expressed a concern with the term ‘nontraditional,’ on the basis that it is a term stating what the group is not. After discussion, the consensus (was) to use the term “multidisciplinary” engineering programs.

Another important topic of that initial meeting was the accreditation of such programs, which had no “program-specific” criteria. The following points were recorded from the meeting:

- a. There is no interest in having program criteria for multidisciplinary engineering programs.
- b. While there is general satisfaction with the program evaluators being provided by the various societies, working with ABET, there was also the opinion expressed that this constituent group has a minimal role, if any, in the selection, training, and evaluation of the program evaluators. Further, few of the faculty (members) in multidisciplinary engineering programs are selected by the professional societies to be program evaluators.
- c. There may be a need for supplemental materials both for multidisciplinary programs preparing to be visited, and for the multidisciplinary program evaluators.
- d. Sponsorship of a training session might be a useful activity.
- e. Could ASEE be a 'lead society' for multidisciplinary programs? (This has financial implications.)"

This inaugural meeting reached consensus that the group “should seek to form a constituent committee within ASEE” and “decided to continue to meet, with the second meeting to be organized for the 2002 ASEE Annual Conference in Montreal, QB.”

Year 2002 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Montreal, QB

The second meeting was described in the early email announcements as the Department Heads of Multidisciplinary Engineering Programs (DHMEP) meeting. The notes of the initial meeting in 2001 had included the statement, “This meeting is to initiate the development of a forum for the department heads of ‘non-traditional programs.’” Similarly, an April 2002 email announcement for the second meeting reflected this theme with the statement,

“Currently, each of the major societies ... has active department heads groups that forward the interests of their respective programs. Our objective is to create a similar supportive activity. For example, at the first meeting, we discussed the benefits of having ASEE serve

as the 'parent' organization for ABET evaluators of non-traditional degree programs. It was widely felt that ASEE's participation in the selection of ABET evaluators for our programs could be helpful. In addition, a direct affiliation with ASEE, regular presence at ASEE conferences, and articles in Prism could focus positive attention on non-traditional programs.”

The proposed agenda for the second meeting read:

"the formalization of DHMEP as an ASEE constituent committee,
"specific examples of special programs and unique features of MEP programs at various colleges and universities,
“ABET experiences,
“draft of a survey related to the faculty issues at non-traditional engineering programs."

The June 17 program slot at the 2002 ASEE Annual Conference in Montreal was again provided by the ECE Division and was listed in the program as Session 1732 Forum for Non-traditional Engineering Programs, with Dr. Gosink and Dr. Jones as Moderators. The published advance description of the session read,

“ABET recognizes non-traditional engineering programs with titles such as general engineering, engineering science, engineering physics, or engineering systems. This forum will provide an opportunity for department heads/chairs and others interested in non-traditional engineering programs to discuss the problems, issues, opportunities, and unique solutions available to the community, including possible formation of an organization/committee."

Unfortunately, Dr. Gosink was unable to attend, but her colleague from Colorado School of Mines, Dr. Robert King, and Dr. Jones ably assumed that role in coordinating the meeting. Dr. King provided notes for the meeting, which included the following two important items:

"The point that some multidisciplinary programs like Bioengineering and Engineering Physics are already represented by ASEE committees. This committee is not meant to supersede any existing committees of ASEE, but members of other committees are welcome to participate in this committee.

"The point that forming a constituent committee is a first step in achieving ABET representation of multidisciplinary programs through ASEE. There is some concern that unless universities are willing to contribute to the cost of ABET's fees and visitor training, ASEE may not support such a proposal. It was emphasized that the constituent committee has other agenda items as well, such as providing a focal point for communications between members and being a contact point for discussions on issues like ABET accreditation. ABET is discussing the issue of blurring the traditional programs, and input from this group may be helpful."

Other notes prepared by Dr. King included the following business:

"The attendees represented a variety of multidisciplinary programs; for example,

1. General engineering programs with no specializations
2. General engineering programs with specializations
3. Programs that merged two or three disciplines but were not as general as 1. or 2.
4. Programs that began as multidisciplinary but later divided and retained the Multidisciplinary degree as well
5. Programs at research universities
6. Programs at liberal arts colleges
7. Programs that merge engineering and management."

A petition to become a Constituent Committee of ASEE, prepared by Dr. Gosink, was edited and then signed by 17 attendees. The group decided to plan a program, with both a technical session and a business meeting, for the 2003 ASEE Annual Conference scheduled for Nashville, TN. Two areas of focus for technical session papers were suggested: multidisciplinary engineering program curricula and multidisciplinary engineering program visibility. Those assembled elected Dr. Gosink as chair, Dr. Jim Farison, Baylor University, as vice chair (and program chair) and Dr. Phillip Young, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, as secretary/treasurer.

From the original initiative at the 2001 meeting and the petition prepared at the 2002 meeting and subsequently submitted to ASEE, the new Multidisciplinary Engineering Constituent Committee (MECC) was approved by the ASEE Board of Directors in mid-October 2002.

The first conference papers by this new group's constituents were presented in sessions of, and through the courtesy of, the Electrical Engineering Division.

Year 2003 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Nashville, TN

The initial MECC bylaws, drafted by Dr. Gosink and reviewed by Dr. Farison, were submitted to ASEE in January and approved by the ASEE Board of Directors on January 26, 2003. This approval was announced in the March 2003 issue of the emailed ASEE ACTION, distributed on February 19.

In a pre-conference publicity emailing, Dr. Gosink wrote:

"The real goal of the MECC is to promote the interests of Multidisciplinary Engineering programs throughout the country. The new affiliation with ASEE provides us with a venue for furthering these interests, and for drawing attention to the very real achievements of these programs."

With full recognition as an ASEE constituent committee, MECC was given the designation 71 and had a formally listed MECC Business Meeting (Session 1671) at the 2003 ASEE Annual

Conference in Nashville. And, as in Montreal, the conference papers by this new group's constituents were presented in sessions of, and through the courtesy of, the Electrical Engineering Division.

The first official MECC organizational meeting, held in Nashville and chaired by Dr. Gosink, was attended by 10 members. Chair Gosink reported that ASEE had approved the MECC petition and a preliminary draft of the group's bylaws. The draft bylaws were reviewed carefully, section by section, and several wording improvements were considered and accepted by consensus. The motion to adopt the revised bylaws was passed by unanimous vote. ASEE elections are held in the Spring. The MECC bylaws provide that officers serve two-year terms, starting at the conclusion of the election year's annual meeting following their Spring election. The first formally elected officers of MECC, to serve the two-year term from July 2003 through June 2005, were:

Chair	Joan Gosink, Colorado School of Mines
Vice chair	James B. Farison, Baylor University
Secretary/treasurer	Philip W. Young, University of Wisconsin, Platteville

The vice chair also serves as program chair. The MECC was now official, with members, officers, and bylaws. Dr. Steven VanderLeest, Calvin College, volunteered to serve and was approved as webmaster. The primary responsibility of the officers revolves around the Annual Meetings held during their terms, so this first term of office was described as 2004-2005.

The approvals of the group's petition and bylaws, however, were too late in the annual cycle for MECC to be eligible to sponsor its own technical sessions in this first year. Nonetheless, with the gracious cooperation of another ASEE unit, this time the Physics and Engineering Physics (PEP) Division, MECC was provided time in a PEP technical session, Session 1380 Issues in Multidisciplinary Programs. The session included the presentation of five papers generated from the MECC constituency.

ASEE records show that at the time of the annual meeting in June, MECC had a membership of 75 individuals. Among the important actions at the 2003 business meeting in Nashville, in addition to the review and approval of the MECC bylaws, was the next step in the development of the mission of the MECC. According to the minutes of that meeting,

"Dr. Gosink indicated that one of the motivations of the group that petitioned for the formation of MECC was to have a role in representing multidisciplinary programs with ABET. She suggested that MECC contact ABET and request notification of discussions of 'multidisciplinary engineering' programs. Those present gave general concurrence."

With formal ASEE recognition as a Constituent Committee, the MECC now had additional resources available, including its listing on the ASEE website and eligibility to host technical sessions at the annual conference. A call for papers for the 2004 Annual Conference was

published in the September 2003 issue (page 55) of ASEE Prism. MECC also distributed its CFP to its own informal mailing list and posted it on its new website. By October 2003, the number of members had grown to 109.

Year 2004 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, UT

By January 2004, MECC membership reached 132.

This year, with its formal recognition as a Constituent Committee, MECC was eligible to have paper sessions in its own name. Many good manuscripts were received and reviewed, and 20 final papers were accepted. The papers were organized into a full program with four technical sessions, and provided an interesting and varied program for the 2004 Annual ASEE Conference. MECC now had its own program, comprising four technical sessions and a business meeting. The first digit in the four-digit session number code designates the day, the second denotes the time slot, and the third and fourth the sponsoring unit (MECC = 71).

Monday, June 21

- 1171 7:00 – 8:15 am Multidisciplinary Courses and Assessment
- 1471 12:30 – 2:00 pm Multidisciplinary Engineering Programs
- 1671 4:30 – 6:00 pm Business Meeting

Tuesday, June 22

- 2171 7:00 – 1:15 am Multidisciplinary Programs: A Look Ahead
- 2471 12:30 – 2:00 pm Multidisciplinary Engineering Education by Design

The business meeting, chaired by Dr. Gosink, was attended by 9 members. The following were the primary items of business:

Dr. Gosink announced that, on Sunday, June 20, the ASEE Board of Directors had approved the concept of assuming the role of “Lead Society” for “EAC programs in engineering (without modifiers), engineering physics, and engineering science(s), and TAC programs in engineering technology (without modifiers).” The ASEE leadership plans to develop and present a petition for this status to ASEE within the next few months. Discussion focused on how MECC could support this effort. It was agreed to contact Dr. Edwin C. Jones for this information. Dr. Gosink also reported that she had been asked to serve on an ASEE implementation committee when the petition was approved by ABET.

The question of evolving MECC into a division was discussed, as the group is coming close to the minimum of 200 members to become a division. Meeting participants were urged to encourage conference session attendees to join MECC.

A nominating committee was formed to recommend candidates for chair, vice chair/program chair and secretary/treasurer for the two-year terms beginning in June 2005. Dr. Gosink

Colorado School of Mines), as out-going chair, Dr. Steve VanderLeest (Calvin College) and Dr. Fred Driscoll (Wentworth Institute of Technology) were selected to serve. Dr. Jones will also be asked to participate.

The 2005 MECC Call for Papers appeared in the Summer (pp. 77) and September (pp. 59-60) 2004 issues of Prism and on the MECC website, and was emailed to the group's extensive contact list. Six technical sessions and a business meeting were requested for the 2005 Annual Conference. Five technical sessions and a business meeting were approved.

The ASEE Board of Directors agreed to proceed with a proposed petition to ABET for "lead society" role and submitted a letter of intent during Summer 2004. The ABET Board of Directors, at their meeting on October 30, 2004, considered the ASEE proposal to become an accreditation "lead society" and took the following action:

ASEE PETITION FOR LEAD SOCIETY TABLED

The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) submitted a petition to the ABET Board of Directors to approve ASEE as the Lead Society for EAC Programs in engineering (without modifiers), engineering physics, and engineering science(s), and for TAC Programs in engineering technology (without modifiers).

Several questions were brought up during the discussion that required further clarification. The Board tabled the motion and asked ASEE to address the questions and acquire inputs and comments from institutions and programs regarding the petition before bringing the petition back to the Board of Directors.

The next ABET Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 2005, at the Waterfront Marriott Hotel in Baltimore, MD.

By the end of 2004, MECC membership had grown to 239. The requirements for upgrading from a Constituent Committee to a Division (Article VI, Section 3, of the ASEE Bylaws) are:

"After a minimum of three (3) years of successful operation, and upon reaching a membership of approximately two hundred or more, the Constituent Committee may petition to the Board of Directors for Divisional status. The petition will be submitted through its Council and the Council will recommend its pleasure to the Board."

An ASEE staff person added, in a December email message, "The Board of Directors can, however, grant Division status at its discretion for units that have grown very quickly and have demonstrated their ability to come up with active volunteer leaders and put on successful technical programs. With your current membership, and having put on four technical sessions at the Salt Lake City meeting, you could probably make a good case for accelerated upgrade to Division status."

Year 2005 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Portland, OR

A revised final proposal documenting ASEE's unique qualifications to serve this constituency was prepared for ABET. The ABET Board of Directors approved this proposal without dissent at its March 18, 2005, meeting. This gave ASEE a "seat at the ABET accreditation table" that undoubtedly added to ASEE's stature among the engineering professional societies and its general visibility within the larger engineering professional community.

This year's MECC Call for Papers resulted in a total of 30 abstracts for review (a couple of which were selected by the program chair from the undesignated site). One was subsequently withdrawn. From the remaining 29 abstracts, 28 were approved for submission of full draft papers. From that number, after two withdrawals, 26 full draft papers were submitted. The six technical sessions requested were reduced to five sessions granted: 2 on Monday, 2 on Tuesday, and one on Wednesday. The review and selection of final papers were influenced both by the number of paper slots in the approved sessions and by the themes of the planned presentation session. After review, 24 draft papers were "accepted pending changes" and 24 final papers were accepted and presented in five paper sessions.

Monday, June 13

1371	10:30 – 12:00 noon	Improving Multidisciplinary Engineering Education
1471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Engineering Programs
1671	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Annual MECC Business Meeting

Tuesday, June 14

2271	8:30 – 10:45 am	Multidisciplinary Engineering Courses
2471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Engineering Education by Design

Wednesday, June 15

3471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Engineering Program Innovations
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The business meeting, chaired by Dr. Gosink, focused primarily on the ABET approval of ASEE's proposal to become the lead society for the accreditation review of "multidisciplinary engineering (and technology) programs and the corresponding responsibility to recruit and train qualified program evaluators."

The second set of officers of MECC, now for the years 2005-2006, were:

Past chair (ex officio)	Joan Gosink, Colorado School of Mines
Chair	James B. Farison, Baylor University
Vice chair	Steven H. VanderLeest, Calvin College
Secretary/treasurer	Catherine Skokan, Colorado School of Mines

Year 2006 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Chicago, IL

As of the end of January 2006, the Division membership had grown to 436. The MECC had reached the level required for division status. As a new division, MECC assumed the new name Multidisciplinary Engineering Division (and the abbreviation MULTI). The new Division bylaws and officer contact information were made available on-line via the path ASEE, Members Services, Divisions (<http://www.asee.org/members/organizations/divisions/index.cfm>), where one could find the following information.

- Multidisciplinary Engineering - Officers, Bylaws, Web site
This group seeks to promote and develop Multidisciplinary Engineering Education by assisting in the development of sound curricula and by representing the interests of multidisciplinary engineering on a national level with regard to accreditation, student placement, etc. The group's goal is to have membership representation from all non-traditional multidisciplinary programs. (No dues)

The MULTI Division also established its own website, located at <http://enr.calvin.edu/mecc>, and maintained by the MULTI webmaster, Dr. Steven VanderLeest.

A program of five paper sessions with 23 papers and the annual business meeting were planned by the Multidisciplinary Engineering Division. The Multidisciplinary Engineering Division also served as secondary sponsors for a session with the Liberal Arts Division, further showing its continuing growth in scope and diversity. The six paper sessions and the annual business meeting were:

Monday, June 19

1171	7:00 – 8:30 am	Multidisciplinary Engineering and Business
1571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	ABET Accreditation of Multidisciplinary Programs

Tuesday, June 20

2471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Design
2571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Multidisciplinary and Liberal Education (co-sponsor: Liberal Education Division)
2671	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Annual Multidiscpl. Engineering Business Meeting

Wednesday, June 21

3171	7:00 - 8:15 pm	Multidisciplinary Course Innovations
3471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Curriculum Innovations

The annual business meeting was convened by Dr. Farison. The current membership (as of June 9) was 524, ranking twentieth of about 48 divisions. The current procedure for nominations for electing next year's officers was noted: "Nominating committee (past chair, chair, and one other member) selects two nominees for each office (chair, vice chair, and secretary/treasurer),

submitted to the secretary/treasurer no later than March 15 and ballot distributed prior to April 1. Voting is by email referendum, completed by May 1. Election is by simple majority of ballots cast.”

Year 2007 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Honolulu, HI

The annual meeting in 2007 in Honolulu saw continued growth of the Division’s numbers of papers and sessions, with records for both sessions (10) and papers (45). This growth reflected undoubtedly both the growing strength of the Division and the exceptionally attractive venue.

Monday, June 25

1371	10:30 am – noon	Multidisciplinary and Liberal Education
1471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Sustainability and Environmental Issues
1571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Curriculum Innovation

Tuesday, June 26

2271	8:30 - 10:15 am	Multidisciplinary Teams
2571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	ABET Accreditation of Multidisciplinary Programs
2671	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Annual Multidiscipl. Engineering Division Meeting

Wednesday, June 27

3171	7:00 – 8:15 am	Experiential and Service Learning
3271		

The annual business meeting was convened by outgoing chair, Dr. Farison. Vice chair VanderLeest reported that we received 48 papers, and reported that some were rejected, sent to other sessions, or withdrawn by author(s). Current membership was reported as 815, ranking eleventh among 49 divisions and constituent committees, and up from 524 among 48 divisions and constituent committees in 2006.

The third set of elected MULTI officers (chair, vice chair and secretary/treasurer) for 2007 and 2008, were:

Past Chair (ex officio)	James B. Farison, Baylor University
Chair	Steven H. VanderLeest, Calvin College
Vice chair	Catherin Skokan, Colorado School of Mines
Secretary/treasurer	Chell Roberts, Arizona State University

ASEE was already well established for its new role as an active participant in the ABET accreditation process. The primary initial responsibility of the new ASEE Accreditation Activities Committee (AAC) was to organize its procedure and criteria for, and then recruit ASEE candidates to serve as program evaluators for ASEE’s multidisciplinary engineering

program accreditation review responsibility. That important process has largely been completed this spring. The next step is to plan and conduct program reviewer training sessions for the 2006-07 cycle of accreditation visits. The AAC will meet again at Chicago in June 2006 to complete its preparation for its initial cycle of visits.

Year 2008 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA

This year’s MULTI Division program again saw new record participation. The 2008 ASEE Annual Conference Program listed the Division as having 12 sessions (8 sole-sponsored and 4 co-sponsored) and 48 papers (32 in sole-sponsored and 16 in jointly-sponsored sessions), plus the annual business meeting, as follows:

Monday, June 23

1471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Sustainability and Environmental Issues
1571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Course Innovation I

Tuesday, June 24

2171	7:00 – 8:15 am	Multidisciplinary Design Constituents
2271	8:30 – 10:15 am	Multidisciplinary Capstone Design Projects (co-sponsor: Design in Engineering Education Div.)
2471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Experiential and Service Learning
2561	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Learning to Communicate with Engineers and Non-Engineers (co-sponsor: Liberal Education Div.)
2571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Curriculum Innovation
2671	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Engineering Division Meeting

Wednesday, June 25

3171	7:00 – 8:15 am	Multidisciplinary and Liberal Education (co-sponsor: Liberal Education Div.)
3471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Teams
3571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Course Innovation II
3625	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Design in the Classroom (co-sponsor: Design in Engineering Education Div.)
3671	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Research in Multidisciplinary Education

The annual Division business meeting was convened by Dr. VanderLeest, with recorded attendance of 9. The Division program chair, Dr. Skokan, reported that the Division received over 90 paper submissions, with about 8 rejections, 10 reassignments to other divisions and trading of 3 and 4, respectively, with co-sponsored sessions with the Liberal Arts and Design Divisions. The final count was 38 papers in our sessions and 10 more paper in joint sessions,

with 11 Multi sessions and 2 jointly-sponsored sessions. Secretary Roberts reported the following dramatic division membership growth statistics, all as of June each year:

2005 – 309, 2006 – 524, 2007 – 815, 2008 – 1009.

He also presented a draft proposal for a MULTI Division “best paper” award that would begin the next year, with presentation at the Division’s business meeting.

Year 2009 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Austin, TX

Monday, June 15

1471 12:30 – 2:00 pm Multidisciplinary Course Innovation

Tuesday, June 16

2171 7:00 – 8:15 am Sustainability and Environmental Issues

2333 10:30 – 12:00 noon Investigating Alternative-Energy Concepts
(co-sponsor: Energy Conversion Div.)

2471 12:30 – 2:00 pm Multidisciplinary Capstone Design Projects

2671 4:30 – 6:00 pm Multidisciplinary Engineering Division Meeting

Wednesday, June 17

3171 7:00 – 8:15 am Multidisciplinary Design Constituents

3471 12:30 – 2:00 pm Multidisciplinary Curriculum Innovation

3471 2:15 – 4:00 pm Engineering and Other Disciplines

This was the first year in which the number of MULTI Division paper sessions declined. The reason is likely, at least in part, due to the rapid spread of “multidisciplinary” influences throughout both engineering education and the engineering profession. This year, in addition to the MULTI Division sponsorship of six sessions and the co-sponsorship of one session, there were three other conference sessions with “multidisciplinary” in the session title. These were sponsored by three other divisions: Design in Engineering Education Division, Division of Experimentation & Laboratory Oriented Studies (DELOS), and Manufacturing Division.

The MULTI Division business meeting was held on June 16, with an attendance of 25. This year’s MULTI membership set a new record (1082), now adding to the steadily increasing annual data:

2005 – 309, 2006 – 524, 2007 – 815, 2008 – 1009, 2009 – 1082.

It was reported that the proposal passed to amend the Division Bylaws so that the vice chair would automatically become the division chair. Further, the proposal for a Division “best paper” award was approved. Drs. Ed Jones and Joan Gosink gave a presentation and led a subsequent discussion on “ABET Criterion 2, “Program Educational Objectives.” The question of forming a “department heads/chairs” group for multidisciplinary engineering programs was also raised.

Our current Professional Interest Council (PIC) chair, Carole Richardson, encouraged the Division to develop an “operating manual,” and a motion to do so was approved. Volunteers were solicited and received for this project. Ann Saterbak, from Rice University, is the incoming PIC II chair.

The fourth set of MULTI officers, for 2009 and 2010, are:

Past Chair (ex officio)	Steven H. VanderLeest, Calvin College
Chair	Catherine Skokan, Colorado School of Mines
Vice chair	Chell Roberts, Arizona State University
Secretary/treasurer	Laura A. Ruhala, Southern Polytechnic State University

Following the formal MULTI Division business meeting, Dr. Gosink chaired a meeting for department heads. It was determined that the chairs/heads of multidisciplinary engineering departments/programs desired to meet annually at the ASEE annual conference but separately from the general MULTI Division meeting.

Year 2010 and the ASEE Annual Conference in Louisville, KY

Planning for the MULTI Division program for the 2010 ASEE conference in Louisville is being completed at the time of this writing. The preliminary schedule of seven technical sessions, a poster session, and the Division business meeting, follows as it is currently posted on the ASEE website preceding the final paper submission deadline of March 12 and the grouping into specific named sessions in early March, follows.

Monday, June 21

1155	7:00 – 8:15 am	Methods and Techniques in Graduate Education
1471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Technical Session I

Tuesday, June 22

2171	7:00 – 8:15 am	Technical Session II
2271	8:30 – 10:00 am	Technical Session III
2671	4:00 - 6:00 pm	Poster Session
2271	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Multidisciplinary Engineering Business Meeting

Wednesday, June 23

3171	7:00 – 8:15 am	Technical Session IV
3471	12:30 – 2:00 pm	Technical Session V
3571	2:15 – 4:00 pm	Technical Session VI

Additional Information

Additional information about each of ASEE's 50 current Divisions and Constituent Committees is given at the ASEE website: <http://www.asee.org/activities/organizations/divisions/index.cfm>

Members of ASEE may affiliate with the Multidisciplinary Engineering Division (MULTI) by selecting MULTI as one of the six groups allowed with the ASEE membership. MULTI does not currently have any dues for affiliation.

Current information about the MULTI Division is available at:

<http://www.asee.org/activities/organizations/divisions/officers.cfm?SGRP=MULTI>

The current bylaws of the MULTI Division are available at:

<http://www.asee.org/actvites/organizations/divisions/bylawsMulti.cfm>.

Officers, Bylaws, Web site

This group seeks to promote and develop Multidisciplinary Engineering Education by assisting in the development of sound curricula and by representing the interests of multidisciplinary engineering on a national level with regard to accreditation, student placement, etc. The group's goal is to have membership representation from all non-traditional multidisciplinary programs.

The Accreditation Activities Committee is now listed on the ASEE website under Committees and has its own presence at:

<http://www.asee.org/members/organizations/Accreditation-Committee.cfm>.

Conclusion

This paper presents an historical review and documentation of the formation and growth of the MULTI Division for current and future members and others, and especially to those who will accept leadership roles in the future. The perspective and data recorded herein can provide a greater awareness of the dramatic growth, current strength, and future potential of the MULTI Division, so that future leaders and members of the Division can continue to build during its second decade. The author acknowledges with appreciation the helpful comments of the reviewers of the draft paper, and would also like to express the strong opinion that ASEE is truly an organization worthy of participation and support, and, perhaps, most of all, of opportunity for learning, growth, and leadership.