

AC 2008-1774: ENHANCING THE ASEE CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM - A SECTION CHAIRS PERSPECTIVE

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Enhancing the ASEE Campus Representative Program A Section Chair's Perspective

Introduction

The ASEE Campus Rep Program is a key component for recruiting and retaining membership in ASEE. As quoted on the ASEE web site, “The growth, stability, and effective operation of ASEE in accomplishing its mission of promoting excellence in engineering education are directly dependent upon Campus Representatives across our nation.” ASEE provides a number of resources to assist Campus Reps in the performance of their required and suggested duties. However, as documented in several surveys (North Midwest Section and Southeast Section), the Campus Rep Program is not performing up to expectations. There are several reasons to explain this lack of expected performance as documented in other works². A Section Chair shoulders some of the responsibility for the continued maintenance and enhancement of the Campus Rep Program within the Section. This paper documents some of the approaches and methods that a Section Chair can undertake to help support the Campus Rep Program.

Responsibilities of the Section Chair and the Section Campus Representative¹

Based on information provided in the ASEE *Geographic Zones and Sections Operating Manual*, one of the duties of the Section Chair is to “designate a Section Campus Representative to foster and oversee the Section's Campus Representative activities.” Consequently, the Section Campus Representative (Rep) should ... “organize and work with local Campus Reps and assist in encouraging attendance at meetings, soliciting and promoting membership in the Society, getting feedback from local faculty members and seeking nominations for ASEE awards.” The Section Campus Rep is responsible for updating the list of Campus Reps in the Section and notifying the ASEE Membership Department of any changes. In lieu of an active and conscientious Section Campus Rep, these duties, by default, become the duties of the Section Chair. However, several of the recommendations and suggestions presented in this paper may be conducted by either the Section Chair or the Section Campus Rep. Effective and ongoing communication between the Section Chair and the Section Campus Rep is needed to decide who should address each of the issues presented in this paper.

In general, before making changes to any process or program, one must become knowledgeable of the overall process or program. From the perspective of a Section Chair, with regard to the Campus Rep Program within the Section, the Section Chair must: 1.) understand the responsibilities of a Campus Rep, 2.) become familiar with the resources that are available for Campus Reps, and 3.) determine “who are the Campus Reps” within the Section. After completing these tasks, the Section Chair can develop methods to measure the performance of the Campus Rep Program within the Section and then based on the findings or results of the measures -- take corrective action and develop a plan of continuous improvement.

What are the Responsibilities of a Campus Rep?

There are two basic categories of Campus Rep responsibilities: 1.) “should do” and 2.) “must do.” An ASEE Campus Rep should perform some of the following activities:

- Inform everyone on your campus that you are their ASEE Campus Representative and will be happy to assist them in dealing with ASEE.
- Work closely with your Dean to create a positive image of ASEE on your campus and publicize your Dean's support of ASEE.
- Recruit new members and follow up to encourage renewal.
- Publicize ASEE activities through your school's public relations office, campus newspapers, bulletin boards, e-mail announcements, etc.
- Promote attendance at section and national ASEE meetings, and encourage innovative instructors to present their ideas at ASEE meetings.
- Publicize ASEE's awards program and make nominations.
- Promote active participation in ASEE's divisions and councils, both at the regional and national level.
- Organize on-campus activities and provide a forum for the faculty to exchange ideas and discuss pedagogical related issues.

The only *required duty* of an ASEE Campus Rep is to:

- File an annual report of your activities (i.e., the annual Campus Rep Report).

What resources are available for Campus Reps?

ASEE headquarters provides a number of resources to assist Campus Reps, including:

- Rosters of active and lapsed members and non-member faculty (and periodic membership status updates throughout the year.
- Membership applications, comprehensive ASEE brochures, and division information.
- Annual Conference information and schedules for section meetings.
- ASEE Student Chapter information.
- Extra copies of the Awards Nomination Booklet that is mailed to all members each year with the November issue of ASEE PRISM.
- Recent copies of ASEE PRISM and the Journal of Engineering Education.
- A list of Society officers, including Program Chairs.

Who are the Campus Reps (and Deans) within the Section?

Prior to embarking on an initiative to improve the Campus Rep Program, a Section Chair should verify that the Campus Rep information that is available on the ASEE and Section websites is correct. The Section Chair could develop a listserv for the Section Campus Reps (and the Section Deans / Administrative Heads). Contact should be made with those individuals that are identified as Campus Reps (cc: the Section Deans). Updated information concerning the Section Campus Reps (names, contact information, etc.) should be shared with ASEE National and posted on both websites (if the Section has a website).

Once the Section Chair understands the responsibilities of a Campus Rep, becomes knowledgeable concerning the resources available to Campus Reps, and determines the accuracy of the information related to the Section Campus Reps, then the Chair can initiate a program to determine the effectiveness of the Campus Rep program and develop a plan for corrective action, if needed. The remainder of this paper addresses measuring the effectiveness of the Campus Rep Program and some methods for corrective action.

Are the Campus Reps performing their required duties?

Within ASEE, as of January 2008, there are a total of three hundred and eight (308) institutions that have a Campus Rep. Table 1 presents recent statistics related to the submission of Campus Rep Reports (i.e., the sole *required duty* of a Campus Rep).

Table 1. Recent Campus Representative Reports - Total Submission Statistics

Year	No. of Reports Submitted	Percent Submitted *
2004-5	26	8.4
2005-6	29	9.4
2006-7 **	78	25.3

* calculated using 308 ASEE institutions with a Campus Rep

** initiated on-line Campus Rep Report

Although the percentage of Campus Rep Reports submitted is increasing, from the data presented in Table 1, it is clear that the majority of Campus Reps are not performing their sole required duty. During 2006-7, an on-line Campus Rep Report was developed and became available for use in November 2007. Table 2 and Table 3 on the following page provide the statistics related to the submission of Campus Rep Reports for 2006-7.

Table 2. 2006-7 Campus Representative Reports - Section Submission Statistics

Section (Zone)	Online	Paper	Total Submitted	Institutions in Each Section *	Percent Submitted by Each Section
New England (I)	3	0	3	28	10.7
St. Lawrence (I)	4	1	5	16	31.3
Middle Atlantic (I)	4	1	5	37	13.5
Southeast (II)	6	2	8	50	16
North Central (II)	3	12	15	34	44.1
Illinois-Indiana (II)	4	1	5	16	31.3
North Midwest (III)	9	2	11	19	57.9
Midwest (III)	9	2	11	22	50
Gulf Southwest (III)	2	0	2	23	8.7
Pacific Northwest (IV)	6	0	6	15	40
Rocky Mountain (IV)	1	1	2	14	14.3
Pacific Southwest (IV)	5	0	5	33	15.2
Kuwait University **	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	56	22	78	308	25.3
Percent Submitted	71.8	28.2			

* based on Campus Rep listing at all ASEE institutions (active/inactive/non-member)

** Kuwait University is not in an ASEE Section

Table 3. 2006-7 Campus Representative Reports - Zone Submission Statistics

Zone	Total Submitted	Institutions in Each Zone	Percent Submitted by Each Zone
I	13	81	16
II	28	100	28
III	24	64	37.5
IV	13	62	21
Kuwait	0	1	0
Totals	78	308	25.3

How well is the Campus Rep Program performing within the Section?

As an example of how a Section Chair (or Section Campus Rep) can assess how well a Campus Rep Program is performing is through the use of a Campus Rep survey (as was done by 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, as well as other activities and services offered by ASEE. Table 4 provides a basic summary of the Campus Rep Survey. A complete description of the survey can be found in “Campus Representative Activities that Promote Engagement and Active Participation in ASEE,” 2007 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference².

Table 4. 2006-7 Campus Representative Survey - North Midwest Section

QUESTIONS	RESPONSE	
	YES	NO
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%)
Survey Respondents = 113 Section Membership = 641 Response Rate = 17.6%		

The results of the survey were sent to all members of the ASEE North Midwest Section which resulted in a few new Campus Rep appointments and some updated contact information. Another intended use of the survey was to establish a baseline for future performance measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of any future initiatives. From the statistics in Table 4, it appears that the Campus Rep Program was not performing up to expectations at the time of the survey.

What can the Section Chair do to increase the effectiveness of the Campus Rep Program?

After conducting a performance review (i.e., a survey in the above case), the Section Chair should compile, format, and perhaps summarize the results which should be sent to all members of the section (via the Section listserve - thus ASEE National will automatically receive a copy). This final step provides actually two purposes, 1.) to share the information with the members and 2.) to demonstrate that input from the membership is valued and is being used to assist in program improvement. Step two is particularly important, since future input from the Section membership is anticipated. This sequence of “closing the loop” should guarantee an increase in future response rates.

One of the primary recruiting tools for ASEE is the Dean’s Program. A Section Chair should contact all Section Deans (or Administrative Heads) to confirm that they are members of the Dean’s Program, or encourage them to join the program. The Section Chair could also contact the Section Campus Reps to “remind” them of the Dean’s Program.

Additional contact from the Section Chair to the general membership of the Section could include information related to National or Sectional conferences (or meetings) and/or other related ASEE information. In addition, the Section Chair should also contact the Section Deans (Administrative Heads) to solicit ideas concerning recruitment and retention of ASEE members, and perhaps the funding of the Section Teaching Award(s).

The Section Chair should also confirm that the Section Program (Conference) Chair or conference coordinator has scheduled a Campus Rep meeting (breakfast or lunch) at the Section Conference to discuss and share suggestions for improvement of the Campus Rep Program and discuss Campus Rep activities, in general.

What follow-up activities are needed?

Additional surveys (or measures) related to the Campus Rep Program need to be initiated by the Section Chair. This follow-up work can then be compared to the original baseline surveys to provide a measure of improvement (or satisfaction) with the Campus Rep Program within the Section. The follow-up information needs to be compiled, summarized, and shared with the Section membership. Continued contact with the Campus Reps, Deans, and Section membership is needed to keep the lines of communication open.

Summary

As described in this paper, a Section Chair must take a lead role in maintaining and improving the Campus Rep Program within the Section. The fundamental tool for improvement is based on effective and ongoing communication. A suggested sequence that could be employed by a Section Chair (or Section Campus Rep) is outlined below:

- 1.) become familiar with responsibilities and duties of a Campus Rep.
- 2.) become familiar with resources that are available to Campus Reps.
- 3.) review information concerning Campus Reps (as found on the ASEE and Section websites).
- 4.) contact all Campus Reps (and Deans) within the Section to verify that the information in item 3.) is correct and update accordingly.
- 5.) contact Campus Reps to inform them of upcoming action items (conferences, Dean's Program, awards, etc.) and post relevant information on the Section website.
- 6.) develop means and measures that will lead to and increase in the effectiveness of Campus Rep Program within the Section (i.e., corrective actions).
- 7.) share information and results compiled from item 6.) with the Section membership.
- 8.) follow-up measures will have to be developed that monitor the quality and effectiveness of the Section Campus Rep Program.

Conclusions

Recruitment, retention, and involvement in ASEE activities and programs are all dependent on effective communication and dissemination of information. The overall success of the Campus Rep Program is ultimately dependent on the individual Campus Reps. Without an effective local

Campus Rep, ASEE activities, including recruitment and retention, are severely hampered. The Section Chair must take a lead role in the communication efforts, but the local Campus Reps must also share in this responsibility in order to disseminate the information. Section Deans also share in the task of improving the Campus Rep Program, since they actually appoint individual Campus Reps. The Dean is responsible for monitoring the performance of the Campus Rep at their institution. If the Campus Rep Program is not functioning adequately at a local institution, this may be a direct reflection of the philosophical beliefs (related to teaching) or the administrative priorities of the Dean².

References

1. American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE web site), <http://www.asee.org/>
2. McIntyre, C., "Campus Representative Activities that Promote Engagement and Active Participation in ASEE," 2007 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference, Honolulu, HI, June 2007.