

University of Minnesota Twin Cities SME Student Chapter

SME Annual Meeting Trip Report

Sophie Kasahara, President

Four students attended the SME Annual Meeting in Phoenix, February 21-23 2016: Sophie Ksahara, President, Richard Jett, Vice President, David Rivera, Treasurer, and Emily Erhart, Outreach Officer.

1. Exhibit Hall

Upon arrival on Sunday, the group immediately went to the exhibit hall to hand out cards to booths for the public awareness campaign. Most booths were happy to set out the cards for us, and in the process we were able to meet new companies and talk to people from different schools. We found that networking with other student groups was a great way to spread awareness about the importance of mining video, and several groups and companies said they would send out information about this campaign to some of their followers. Going to the exhibit hall was an overall great experience, and the huge capacity of the exhibit hall showed us how many different types of companies go into the field of mining.

2. Gala Dinner

After the exhibit hall, we went to the Gala dinner and sat at a table with Greg Beckstrom. We socialized with other members at our table, and watched the president hand out awards for donators and scholarships for exceptional students.

3. Student Mixer

After the Gala dinner we attended the student mixer. The student mixer provided a great opportunity for us to meet other students and socialize. We met students from a variety of places, including South Dakota.

4. Keynote Speaker

On Monday, we attended the Keynote talk in the morning. We watched a talk presented by the astronaut Mike Mullane. He talked about the normalization of lower standards, and how it can lead to catastrophic events such as the Challenger. The Challenger disaster was something that he said was preventable, and several of the employees at NASA voiced concern over the o-rings that were eventually what caused the devastating explosion. Due to pressure from their schedules, NASA decided to push ahead with the launch and ignore the voices of concern. Mike Mullane wants companies to recognize when they may be letting lower standards slip through, so that they can push for the higher standards that they originally set.

5. Young Leaders Lunch Session

At this lunch session we listened to a talk about the challenges of switching out of a normal, standard routine into something that is new and different, but more cost effective. We also had an opportunity to network, and we discussed with a graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison about how they grew their geo-engineering program and what techniques we could adopt to help grow the UMN program.

6. Exhibit Hall

After the Young Leaders luncheon, we finished handing out our public awareness cards in the exhibit hall.

7. Seminar: *Geology: Best Practices for Mineral Resource and Mineral Reserves Estimation and Reporting. "Roles of a Competent Person."*

This seminar provided us with information on the role of the competent person in the geotechnical workforce, and what type of responsibility this job entails.

8. Young Leaders Mentoring Reception

At this young leaders event, we had another opportunity to network and expand our knowledge of what the young leaders workplace environment consists of and who is involved in the up and coming leadership roles for various companies.

9. Women's Breakfast

Emily and I attended this event and we are so glad that we did. At this talk various women discussed how the role of women in the mining industry has changed over the years, and how we need to keep expanding the program to new professionals to keep growing the WAAIME section of SME. We also discussed with several professionals from Minnesota about how to change the stigma that surrounds mining, and how to have open and honest conversations about all the resources that mining provides, which often people against mining take for granted.

10. Seminars

I attended three different seminars in the afternoon. The first was an environmental remediation talk about cleaning up a river and tributary system after a Cobalt and Copper mine had closed in 1960. This talk was very interesting and talked about the amount of time and effort it takes to restore the salmonid and sculpin population. The next talk was called "Analyzing Global Energy Security Plans & Role of Renewables", and talked about how mines around the world are using renewable resources to help run their mine. The last talk I attended was called "Anti-Mining Terrorism in Peru", and this talk discussed the violent attacks that "Environmental NGO" groups have perpetrated against the policemen that protect the legal mining in Peru. This was one of the most interesting talks I have attended, because it was a clear display of how misinformation has created an incorrect and negative stigma surrounding mining.

11. Friends of Minnesota

The last event we attended was the "Friends of Minnesota" meeting, and we got to meet the members of the UMD SME chapter and one of the IRE members. This was a great opportunity because we swapped ideas with the UMD chapter on how to increase our chemical engineering involvement (for them CECE involvement) and made plans to meet up at our GeoWall competition.

12. Final Overview/Summary

This trip was overall a great opportunity to network with companies and other schools, through both face-to-face interaction and also from listening to seminars about topics of interest. Being a student with an interest in mining, it was impressive to see the vast amount of people in the industry, and how wide the industry is. I would like to thank the TC chapter for funding this trip. From the vast amount of knowledge and connections that my fellow officers and I obtained from this trip, we found the trip to be a fantastic opportunity to learn and grow as upcoming professionals in the mining industry.