

# Editorial | 2016: A Year of Leadership and Innovation through Collaboration and Partnering

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2016 will mark many key milestones for our profession, and will have many exciting opportunities to shape our future.

As we enter this important time in the history of structural engineering, let's not forget that our greatest achievements and innovations always come when we work together in teams. Structural engineers often cite inspiration from other fields, such as physics, chemistry, or art, when they develop a novel idea or solution to an important problem. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of design and the related body of engineering knowledge together necessitate our interaction with specialists in all manner of disciplines, from soils to advanced composite materials. Even within our own discipline, there are numerous specialists and component engineers – each having their own custom tools and methods – who must interact to make a project succeed. Today, no structural engineer can practice in a silo.

With this in mind, I would like to draw your attention to some important upcoming events in the new year, all of which are the result of collaboration and teamwork:

- First, 2016 will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Structural Engineering Institute. SEI was the first technical institute of ASCE, and today has grown to over 25,000 worldwide members in research, academia, and practice. SEI operates with an independent board of governors and engages in all manner of activities to advance the profession of structural engineering. However, SEI also benefits from collaboration and partnership with its nine sister technical institutes in such diverse areas as: geotechnical engineering (G-I); architectural engineering (AEI); and coasts, oceans, ports, and rivers (COPRI). SEI also has developed important partnerships with peer organizations including NCSEA, CASE, SECB, SELC, ATC, IStructE, and IABSE.
- Second, 2016 will mark the release of a new edition of SEI's flagship standard, ASCE/SEI-7 *Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures*. In addition to important updates to every section, ASCE/SEI 7-16 will for the first time include a chapter on tsunami loads, driven by a worldwide need to address this critical hazard for which no generally accepted structural design standards previously existed. Research for this new chapter was jointly funded by SEI and our partner institute, COPRI. Only through this unique combination of resources, combined with a global team of experts, could the important work be done to develop this new standard which will enhance public safety.
- In February 2016, SEI and CASE will partner for the first time with the Geo-Institute (G-I) for a unique and fascinating conference in Phoenix called the *Geotechnical and Structural Engineering Congress*. This one-time event will feature all of the great things that participants have come to expect from Structures Congress – excellent short courses (including one on ASCE/SEI 7-16 taught by leading experts who worked on the standard), networking opportunities, and tracks on such key topics as earthquake engineering, blast and impact loading, and the popular CASE Risk Management Convocation.



In addition, attendees of the 2016 conference will benefit from a unique opportunity to interact with the world's top geotechnical engineers and learn about topics crucial to structural engineers, such as the latest ground-improvement methods and soil-structure interaction for earthquake engineering. With so much new scientific knowledge and technology being introduced in both fields, never has the interface between structural and geotechnical engineers been more important. The 2016 *Geotechnical and Structural Engineering Congress* promises to be a fantastic opportunity for structural engineers to expand their knowledge and build new relationships with fellow design professionals in our two related fields.

- Finally, in 2016 SEI will launch a new Global Activities Division. With an important mission to address the needs of a worldwide membership, this new division will be a tremendous opportunity to create new links between structural engineers around the world. Stay tuned this spring for more information on this exciting initiative.

Our capacity to innovate hinges on our ability to draw talent and inspiration from many different fields and from each other – each one of us with a different background and perspective on the critical issues we face. 2016 promises to be a year of great opportunity for those who can leverage these partnerships effectively. We must build more links between our organizations, both inside and outside of our discipline, to ensure a vibrant future of innovation and leadership for structural engineers. ■



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