

Editorial | Partnerships: New and Ongoing

By Jennifer Goupil, P.E., F.SEI, M.ASCE



Your professional organizations always work hard for you, but often the groups work together for even greater impact by expressing a unified voice, strengthening an existing program's effectiveness, or providing unique opportunities not otherwise available. New programs are announced with excitement and celebration, but then often go on to serve the profession silently, without follow-up reports on successes. I would like to discuss several unique partnerships so that you are aware, or can become re-acquainted, with these successful efforts.

There are two strong examples underway that unify many voices within the profession of structural engineering. The Structural Standards Coordination Council (SSCC) is comprised of U.S. standards development organizations (SDOs) and allied parties including ASCE/SEI, ACI, AISC, AISI, AWC, TMS, and NCSEA. The mission of the SSCC is to provide an organized mechanism for planning and coordinating the development schedules of structural standards maintained by U.S. SDOs for the benefit of public safety, health, and welfare, as well as for the benefit of structural engineering practice. This group has been meeting for many years informally, but formally organized into the SSCC in 2013. It currently meets twice per year and is working towards a coordinated suite of structural standards to be adopted into the 2018 cycle of the ICC codes.

In addition, all of the national professional organizations representing structural engineers – SEI, NCSEA, SECB, CASE – have come together to form the Structural Engineering Licensure Coalition (SELC). The SELC has been meeting since 2012 to champion the cause of structural engineering licensure and to build a consensus among all stakeholders. SELC has collected and developed resources and will be making presentations at the Structures Congress in April, as well as participating at the NCEES Annual Meeting in August, to advance its mission. SELC meets twice per year at the SEI Structures Congress in the spring and at the NCSEA Structural Engineering Summit in the fall, as well as via quarterly teleconferences; learn more about SELC at www.selicensure.org.

To bolster professional pursuit of structural licensure, the Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB) has created an opportunity for members of SEI and NCSEA to encourage more members to obtain SECB certification. Part of SECB's mission is to promote structural engineering licensure in all jurisdictions by providing a common national certification. The partnerships with SEI and NCSEA serve to strengthen the program's effectiveness; learn more at www.secertboard.org.

NCSEA and SEI partner in more ways than one to strengthen outreach to students and educators, but one understated effort involves creating the NCSEA-SEI "Make Your Mark" poster each year. The NCSEA Advocacy Committee and the SEI Public Relations Committee jointly develop the poster and its message, along with distribution efforts to encourage students to pursue a career in structural engineering. The poster is available online from both organizations.

Collaboration on common topics is also embedded in many committees; for example, the Joint SEI-CASE Committee on BIM endeavors to remain current with developments as well as to disseminate information about BIM. Additionally, since business and professional practices are central to all member services, the SEI Business and Professional Activities Division Executive Committee includes a representative from CASE and a liaison from NCSEA.

Distinctive opportunities abound in all of our professional organizations, but often partnerships create unique events that serve the profession. The ongoing partnership between CASE and SEI to include the CASE Spring Risk Management Convocation as part of the annual SEI Structures Congress is unparalleled. CASE provides a forum to improve the quality of structural engineering through enhancement of business practices. Access to these focused and specialized sessions are provided for all technical program registrants at the Structures Congress. The Convocation kicks off with a poignant plenary breakfast, followed by a full day's track of technical sessions. Learn more about the CASE Spring Risk Management Convocation and this year's Structures Congress at www.structurescongress.org.

Finally, the unprecedented SEI partnership with the ASCE Geotechnical & Structural Engineering Institute for the 2016 Geotechnical & Structural Engineering Congress will provide structural engineers with unmatched education and networking opportunities with colleagues within and across disciplines. Learn more at www.geo-structures.org and note that the call for submissions to be considered for the technical program is currently open through April 7, 2015. It is important to realize that this event is developing as a new, joint event that will combine the best of both Institutes' annual conferences – including the CASE Risk Management Convocation – and that there is no separate Structures Congress planned for 2016.

While this highlights many unique and specific partnerships among your professional societies, there are many others that exist. Success in all of these endeavors depends upon member leadership and participation, as well as staff support and cooperation. I am joined by many with a message of thanks for these successful partnerships, as it is evident to me that the new and ongoing efforts are the result of a lot of hard work, yet the benefits to our profession are unrivaled. ■



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