

Yukon | 2012

CFES Congress 2012 Report

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Introduction

The Canadian Federation of Engineering Students is a national, bilingual, student run organization that provides services to its members in the form of development conferences and events.

CFES Congress is an annual, bi-lingual, student-run conference that has two primary objectives. The first is that CFES Congress is the annual general meeting of the CFES, and the second is that it provides a platform from which students can collaborate with and learn from our industry partners, sponsors, and fellow students. CFES Congress is hosted by a university that is a member of the CFES; past locations include Hamilton, Ontario and St. John's, Newfoundland.

Congress is a weeklong event where delegates of the many schools have a chance to network and learn from each other. Throughout the day, there are professional development sessions, round-table discussions, industry networking, and more. The evening activities allow students to socialize with each other and for the host school to showcase their city/campus. Last year in St. John's, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Student Society "screached in" everyone.

The Regina Engineering Students' Society is one of the many undergraduate engineering societies across Canada that is a member of this nation-wide organization. We pride ourselves on being one of the smallest schools with an equal or larger representation at this event. Many of the RESS' current activities were ideas that were shared and learned through the channels and round-table discussions that were set up at Congress.

Sessions

Over the course of the week I attended a number of professional development, student development and informational sessions from roundtables to panel discussions.

I must apologize that my notes on these sessions are rather incomplete. As a CFES officer I was responsible for moderating a few sessions and do not have minutes from them. However there was at least another delegate from Regina in the sessions that I hosted, so they might have proper documentation.

Keys to a Productive Discussion

Main points were:

- Respect
 - o Understanding both sides of the argument
 - o Don't dominate the discussion
 - o Only one person is allowed to speak at a time
- Attitude
 - o Don't be selfish
 - o No personal attacks
 - o Discussions are always business, never personal
- Preparation
 - o Take notes
 - o Understand the issue

Alumni Involvement

This main idea of this session was to discuss activities that societies do to get their alumni involved with their events.

UBC:

They have their alumni stay in contact with the faculty and collaborate with the faculty to run very large homecoming events. They also use alumni to help keep their traditions alive.

Queens:

Alumni really want to give back and stay involved in the engineering society. The university will always seek out alumni for donations, however it is good to approach the alumni to bypass the university for sponsorship. Queens used to have a committee on the society that handled alumni contact information and are working on getting it back.

ETS:

During the Quebec Engineering Games, they have “Godfathers” for each competition, who are alumni that are helping out. These Godfathers tell stories, help to keep people “in line”, they help in getting sponsorship and sometimes even donate money.

Lauren’s Questions

At President’s Meeting 2011, the VP Communication was mandated to send out an email to the members each month that asked a question specific to each student society. All of the answers to the question were collected and compiled into a document and posted on the website.

Feedback:

Most liked the idea because it brought up things that were not often talked about.

Some were annoyed with the PDF format but the majority liked it. There was a suggestion that they should be all compiled into one document.

Engineering Publications

There are many publications that other engineering societies run from online newsletters to print newspapers and magazines.

Criteria:

- High cost, high readership -> Yearbooks
- low cost, low readership -> Online blogs
- and everything in between

People you need:

- Finance, Administrator, Editor(s), Graphic Designer(s)

If you are making money from ads, you can hire graphic designers.

Marketing/Advertising:

- CUAdvertising (we use them)
- Casb Advertising (used by Queens and a few others)

Types of Design:

Visceral Design – subconscious/automatic
Behavioural Design – how it feels, usability
Reflective Design – how it makes us feel after the production

Are all important in any publication

Content

- steal from other sources (but source them)
- conference delegates should write articles
- offer incentives
- partner and build alliances
- build on other peoples work

The faculties sponsor some publications.

If people get offended by your publication or MAY be offended, go to these groups to ask the offendees if they are OK with it.

Printing:

We use Premier Agendas, some have suggested trying Direct Image for better quality.

Nic's Meeting

Nic's Meeting was a session for any of the VP Externals to ask Nic (the president of CFES) any questions or bring up any concerns.

Questions and Topics discussed:

Sponsorship

- who makes the CFES sponsorship package?
 - o A few people work on it

Efficient Communication

- twitter should be used more for casual communication regarding "updates"
 - o CFES will tweet updates more

Facebook

- At Congress 2008 the organization was mandated to not have a facebook group for privacy/professional reason. Now that there are pages, perhaps we should make one.

The remaining session was talking about motions which I will cover in the plenary section.

Climate Change in the North

This was a very informative presentation from John Streicker, one of the lead climate researchers in Canada and the president of the Green Party of Canada.

35% drop in the average sea ice area in the last decade. 70% drop in volume.

At this rate, the permanent ice will be gone in 10 years, and the arctic continent will become seasonal (winter).

Santa Clause and the elves will drown

However, this halves the distance between New York and Beijing.

Why should we be concerned with this? OIL!

Any oil spills in the arctic region will end up in Canada due to the ocean currents and winds.

There will be wildlife displacement, but it isn't that big of a deal because they will relocate and adapt.

Climate is an ongoing thing, they don't know for sure what is causing the change but they are 90% certain humans caused it.

Ocean is the key thing with climate change, not the atmosphere. Energy comes to earth from the sun and gets stored in the ocean, not the atmosphere. Because of earth's position, the north warms 2-3 times faster than the rest of the planet.

A result of the arctic melting is that the energy will not be reflected off the surface, it will be stored in the ocean. Big changes to come.

Climate change is a problem for Yukon because infrastructure is built on permafrost, if it thaws buildings fall down.

Climate change is here, we have to design for the future and we all will play a critical role in shifting sustainability.

Future of the CFES

The following are bullet points of some ideas that were brought up.

- Professionalism and sensitivity training
- industry partners
- increased social media presence
- address on-going issues
- open lines of communication
- streamline/consolidate positions
- reduce delegate fees
- more value to EngSoc than individual
 - o transplant ideas to schools
- gateway to future sponsors
- better survey's
 - o include professionals
- more connectivity – engsoc exchange
- CFES Forum
- CFES Officers visit all schools
- Response race
- Suggestion manual (Like the one in WESST)
- Eliminate the need for mandating everything
- Membership accountability
- Demonstrate relevance
- Back up all doc's to avoid problems

Plenary

This section will discuss the motions brought forward at plenary, the results and the reasoning behind our votes.

Only the motions that had a substantial debate will be listed here, other motions were merely housekeeping or otherwise very straightforward. For the entire agenda visit CFES.ca

Proposal 44-CFES-11

To increase interest in the election as well as understand the level of membership support for elected individuals.

The number of votes for each officer candidate and event bidder be announced at the end of the election.

Failed

The general consensus here was that if a person found out that they had zero votes, they would emotionally distraught and lose all motivation. We voted opposed.

Proposal 44-CFES-12

To provide the CFES with a Sustainability Policy, that is consistent with the Green Policies of similar organizations.

The CFES National Executive was mandated at PM 2011 (05-CFESPM-12) to revisit and revise the existing CFES Sustainability Policy;

Passed

Proposal 44-CFES-13

A green policy was presented and we voted for the ratification of the sustainability policy.

Goal:	To clarify National Executive powers for creating new Commissioner positions or leaving a Commissioner position vacant for a period of one year or less.
Whereas:	Section 6 of the policy manual is unclear as to the powers and choices of the Executive, and reads: " <i>Commissioners are appointed by the CFES National Executive to complete specific portfolios, and consist of the following eight</i>

	<i>positions: ...";</i>
BIRT:	Section 6 of the Policy Manual is revised to read: <u>"Commissioners are appointed, as required, by the CFES National Executive to complete specific portfolios. The following eight positions are traditionally available; however, Commissioner roles may be created or left vacant at the discretion of the Executive. In the event of a vacancy in the following Commissioners, the Executive will accept the assigned tasks and responsibilities."</u>

Passed

This motion would essentially allow the national executive to create or remove commissioner positions, as they are needed. This way the executive would not have to submit a motion at a general assembly to get work done. We voted in favour of this motion.

Proposal 44-CFES-14

Goal:	To permanently establish an annual CFES Officer Work Plan initiative as a means to provide members with clearer, more concise information about the progress of the Officers in their projects and mandates throughout the year.
Whereas:	Section 3.1.1 (7) of the policy manual lists a duty of the President as: <i>"Ensuring the Interim Report, with summary of actions taken to complete the previous year's mandates, is completed no later than the first day of the congress"</i> .
Furthermore:	The strategic plan was modified at Congress 2011 to a format that included the following specific categories for the Interim Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person responsible • Description of objective • Success indicators • Follow-up actions
BIRT:	The Strategic Plan that was mandated at Congress 2011 be renamed the CFES Officer Work Plan and be adopted as the official format for the Interim Report.

Passed

The CFES Officer Work Plan was a new initiative started so that incoming officers could clearly outline their roles and responsibilities as well as anything new they would like to bring to the position. As a current CFES officer, I believed this was a good idea for responsibility, accountability and transparency. We voted in favour of this motion.

Proposal 44-CFES-15

Goal:	To merge the Social Issues and Charity Commissioner positions.
Whereas:	The Social Issues and Charity portfolios have light workloads, and the scope of those portfolios overlap significantly;
BIRT:	The Social Issues and Charity Commissioners positions be merged and named the Commissioner of Social Responsibility;

Passed

The motion should clearly explain the reasoning behind this. We voted in favour of it.

Proposal 44-CFES-17

Goal:	To better leverage the role of the National Councillor as an advisor and to allow improved team-wide skill compositions, by allowing the National Councillor positions to be filled by appointment.
Whereas:	Article IV, Section 49 of the Constitution currently reads: <i>"The two (2) Councillors are elected at the Annual General Assembly. If a vacancy occurs, the Board of Directors appoints a Councillor by interim until the end of the term of office."</i> ;
Furthermore:	Section 4 of the policy manual currently reads: <i>"4. National Councillors: Two National Councillors are elected to provide high-level experience, guidance, and perspective to the CFES Officers. 4.1 Tasks and Responsibilities The National Councillors' tasks and responsibilities include: 1. Providing regular feedback on CFES strategies, activities and operations 2. Ensuring that the team dynamics are supportive of the CFES vision and mission</i>

	3. Actively supporting initiatives which further the long term goals of the organization”;
BIRT:	Article IV, Section 49 of the Constitution be amended to read: <u>"The two (2) Councillors are nominated by the Board of Directors of the term for which they will serve, and appointed by the Board of Directors active at the time of nomination."</u>

Failed

This motion brought up a very heated debate. Currently the National Councilor position is voted on, this motion was to change it so the board could appoint the members who would then advise them. A counter proposal was then brought forward to remove the voting rights on the board if they were appointed to the board.

Some argued that since the NC position is an advisor role that the board should appoint its own people to advise them. It was also brought up that if they are only advisors they do not need to have voting rights.

We countered the point about voting rights by saying that if they are advisors (given their long involvement with the CFES) they should have the power to steer the organization in the right direction. We countered the initial motion by saying that we felt there was no problem with the current process and that the membership and voting member are responsible enough to elect good advisors.

This motion failed by 4 votes. We broke for recess and then it was voted on to restart debate. It was voted on again and failed again the second time by 8 votes.

Proposal 44-CFES-18-CP

Goal:	To optimize the written translation efficiency of CFES.
Whereas:	CFES is currently required to translate all documents and correspondence, regardless of importance, into both languages, and this policy is recognized as both time-consuming and inefficient;
Furthermore:	CFES translation is the responsibility of the Official Language Commissioner, a volunteer position held by an engineering student with no professional training, and as a result translation must be outsource at a cost of ~\$0.02 a word;

BIRT:	<p>The following Appendix K be added to the Policy Manual:</p> <p><u><i>Appendix K: Translation Guidelines</i></u></p> <p><u><i>The following items require translation before distribution:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u><i>Constitution and Policies</i></u> ● <u><i>Binding documents</i></u> ● <u><i>Strategic plan</i></u> ● <u><i>CEC Rules</i></u> ● <u><i>General Assembly documentation</i></u> ● <u><i>Conference delegate information</i></u> ● <u><i>Official communications, with reports remaining in the language of origin</i></u> ● <u><i>Information directed at students of members (such as delegate packages, surveys, information manuals, guides, etc.)</i></u> ● <u><i>Text of any communications from the VP Communications</i></u> <p><u><i>Additional documents can be translated upon request if necessary.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Minutes of General Assemblies and reports may be distributed before translation.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Members may request the translation of any other documents.</i></u></p>
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Passed

Because the CFES is a bilingual organization, it is important that documents be translated. Seeing as how we are an English speaking university this doesn't really apply to us and that it was put forward by two Quebec schools we voted for it.

Proposal 44-CFES-26-CP

Goal:	To make submitting proxy information to the CFES more expedient.
Whereas:	Currently the only proxy forms allowed are physical original drafts;
Furthermore:	Article 31 of the Constitution currently reads:

	<i>"A member shall, by means of a written proxy, appoint a proxy holder to attend and act at a specific meeting of the General Assembly." ...;</i>
BIRT:	Any official communication stating proxy information (including email, facsimile, scan, etc) be accepted as a valid proxy.
BIFRT:	That Article 31 of "Canadian Federation of Engineering Students Constitution" be changed to <i>"A member shall, by means of official communication or <u>written signed</u> -proxy form, <u>either original or facsimile</u>, appoint a proxy holder to attend and act at a specific meeting of the General Assembly."...</i>

Passed

There has been a lot of debate on whether or not voting persons need a proxy form to vote on behalf of their school. Filling out a proxy form is a minor convenience and no delegate from the U of Regina has ever had a problem getting one signed. It is a mere inconvenience.

This counter-proposal essentially allows a proxy signature to be emailed in when one of the head delegates forgets or cannot get one signed. We voted in favour.