

February 15, 2002

Ms. Sonya Hollenbeck
Member Relations
Earthquake Engineering Research Institute
499 14th Street, Suite 320
Oakland, CA 94612-1934

Dear Sonya:

I am writing to report the events of Chris Poland's recent visit to UCSD sponsored by the EERI Visiting Professional Program. Speaking on behalf of the students and faculty in the Structural Engineering Department, his visit of February 12-13, 2002 was memorable and beneficial for all involved. This visit certainly accomplished the objectives of the visiting professionals program in fostering better understanding and communication between earthquake practitioners and those in academia.

Upon Chris's arrival on Tuesday morning we immediately rushed him in for the last 20 minutes of an undergraduate analysis class. He spent that time talking with the students about the importance of what they were learning and the role of hand-calculations in the professional environment. As more and more things are done with computer analysis, he emphasized the importance of really knowing what you are doing. He gave examples from his experience of simple mistakes made with computer analysis that were not caught until late in the game. He taught the students to always try to develop reasonable bounds for the solution of a problem using simple hand calculations so that you can trust computer results.

Next, Chris came to our advanced seismic design course which focuses on the design and analysis of energy dissipating and base isolation systems. Professor Andre Filiatrault provided an overview of the contents of the course and then gave Chris the opportunity to speak for several minutes on his professional experience with issues related to these topics. One important point Chris made is that as graduate students in this university we are receiving the latest information and newest analysis techniques. When we graduate and move on we will bring that knowledge to the "old guys" at whatever firm that we join, serving as bridges to transfer information from academia to practice.

In the middle of the day we had an informal lunch with the intention that students and faculty would come and go at their convenience during the lunch hour. The event turned out differently than anticipated because people kept coming but they didn't leave! The informal atmosphere of the event helped the students to feel comfortable asking questions. Chris spent the entire time responded to students' questions about working in the consulting business, the future of structural engineering, and other issues of interest. Chris had a hard time to getting a bite to eat in between questions. The interaction at the event was excellent.

Following the lunch, I took Chris on a tour of the laboratory testing facilities at UCSD. We visited the Structural Components Laboratory, Charles Lee Powel Structural Systems Laboratory, and the Caltrans SRMD (Seismic Response Modification Device) Laboratory. A large viscous damper was being tested while we were visiting the SRMD Facility. The damper was a prototype of the design that will be used on a bridge in Italy. The laboratory tours were a wonderful opportunity to expose Chris to some of the work that we are doing here at UCSD.

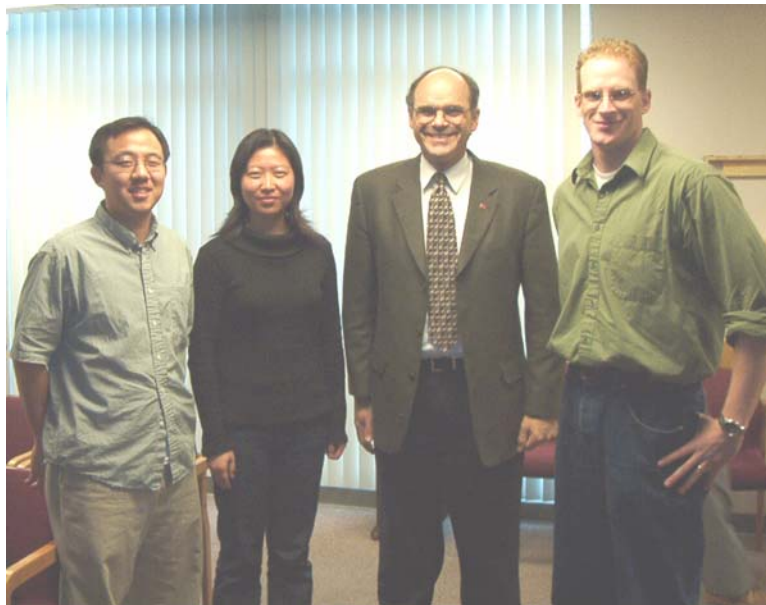


(left) Charles Lee Powel Structural Systems Laboratory;, (top right) Viscous Damper recently tested in SRMD, photo taken after the visit with damper out of the testing assembly; (bottom right) Structural Components Laboratory

In the afternoon Chris attended the graduate level reinforced concrete design course taught by Robert Englekirk. We wanted to give Chris the opportunity to see what goes on in the classes here at UCSD. As with the class earlier in the day, it provided an opportunity for him to see what material the students are learning in class and how that material is being presented so he can understand, to some degree, what recent graduates from UCSD have seen in the classroom.

In the late afternoon Chris presented his first of two seminars. The topic of the presentation was: *The Role of Structural Engineers in Making Decisions Related to Earthquake Engineering*. He discussed the importance of identifying different levels of expected structural performance and being able to explain performance in a way that owners can understand. He proceeded to discuss several examples from projects that Degenkolb Engineers had worked on. The seminar was well attended by undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty.

Following the seminar the EERI officers went out to dinner with Chris. He taught us more about the consulting practice and the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute. Chris shared some of the experiences he has had with other student chapters and gave us ideas of things we could do based on what they have done. Our conversation helped us as officers to see how our chapter fit into the entire organization and gave us great ideas of how to increase our influence and involvement.



Chris Poland and the UCSD EERI Student Chapter Officers (Luke Lee, Dawn Cheng, and Paul Richards)

Wednesday began with a breakfast meeting where the EERI and ASCE student chapter representatives reported to Chris on their activities. The ASCE Student Chapter President had the opportunity to show him their progress on a concrete canoe sponsored by a generous donation from Degenkolb Engineers and personally thank him for the donation. Chris asked us, the EERI officers, about our student chapter's involvement (or lack thereof) in the EERI Student Paper Competition and other opportunities geared towards student in the EERI organization. This discussion increased our awareness of available opportunities and will lead to greater participation from the students in our chapter in the future.

Following the breakfast meeting, we had time scheduled for one-on-one appointments. Interested students had signed up previously for individual meeting times with Chris to discuss whatever they wanted. The opportunity to sit down one-on-one with the president of a large structural engineering firm and ask him anything was truly unique. The individual advice Chris gave was greatly appreciated by those who chose to participate.

Chris presented his second seminar of the visit before lunch. The topic of the presentation was: *Observations on the Correlation Between Measured Ground Motion and Observed Damage*. Chris discussed information he obtained in investigations following the September 21, 1999 Taiwan Earthquake. After describing the ground motions that were obtained during the event, Chris gave examples of the performance of buildings located next to the locations where these strong motions were recorded. His main observation was that these building performed much better than our current analytical procedures would predict. He talked about the need for more research to develop analytical tools that can correlate better with observed damage. His presentation was followed by excellent questions and discussion with the faculty and students. Many of the topics he touched on are related to research that students and faculty are involved in.



Chris exchanging contact information with Faculty following the seminar

The final event of the visit was lunch with EERI faculty members and past and present EERI student chapter officers. Throughout the meal Chris fielded questions relating to his business, personal time management, EERI, and other topics.



Chris took advantage of every opportunity to share his insights with students and faculty

The UCSD Student Chapter is grateful for everyone who made this experience possible. We really appreciate those whose financial contributions are sponsoring the visiting professionals program; I wish we could thank them personally. We are grateful for Chris Poland's willingness to spend his time with us. He gave us three days worth of work in just a day and a half. We want to thank you, Sonya, and the other EERI staff for your help in coordinating the visit. Finally, we'd like to thank Chris Poland's secretary at Degenkolb, Anne Tam, for her assistance in scheduling the visit and helping to take care of the details. This was a tremendous experience and well worth the resources that were required to make it possible.

Sincerely,

Paul Richards
Vice-President, UCSD-EERI Student Chapter

cc: Anne Tam