

Report: USC Student Chapter Visit by David Friedman

The USC Student Chapter of EERI was delighted to host David Friedman on 18-November 2009. In addition to his seminar, David was able to meet with Civil Engineering department faculty and student chapter members throughout the day. It was a very rewarding experience for the chapter and an excellent opportunity for David to become acquainted with USC. This report will summarize the day's activities, offer insight about the successes, and identify areas for improvement.

Initially upon arrival, David was greeted by Charles DeVore and Fabian Rojas, the vice-president and president of the chapter. We had time to sit down for a coffee and discuss David's work and the chapter's background. Then it was off to a meeting with faculty and a tour of the lab facilities. Afterwards, several faculty members took David out for lunch.

Following lunch was the first speaking engagement, an informal roundtable discussion titled: The State of the Art of Structural Engineering. Student members were able to hear from a practicing engineer's perspective a wide range of topics related to earthquake engineering. While most of the students were shy about asking questions, David was still able to engage them and share his perspective. A picture of the discussion is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Roundtable Discussion

Following the roundtable discussion, David met with the department head, Prof. J.P. Bardet. Afterwards, Charles and Fabian took David for a tour of the USC campus. During which, David was able to see the distinctive architectural theme on campus as well as some of its exceptions. Following this tour, David was able to meet with another faculty member and visit the secondary lab facilities.



Figure 2: Seminar

The final activity for the day was a seminar titled: Three Unique Structural Engineering Projects in Northern California By Forell/Elsesser. These projects were very unique and dealt with many different areas of earthquake engineering. The seminar was very well attended and extremely well received. A picture from the seminar is shown in figure 2.

While the entire day was a success, the seminar stood out as a huge success. One reason for this was the topic selection. By covering the breadth of three different projects, David was able to appeal to a wide audience. Additionally, these different topics dealt with different engineering problems and different structural

systems. This allowed David to discuss several unique engineering problems that are not normally encountered.

In light of the successes, there are however, two areas that could be improved for future visits. First, while the roundtable was very interesting for the members that attended, the audience was primarily students with plans to go into academic research in the future. It would be beneficial to promote the event to students with an interest in practice as they would have an even greater interest in the discussion. Second, even with minimal outside promotion, several members of the Southern California chapter and two students from CalTech were able to attend the seminar. With greater promotion and collaboration, significantly more members would be able to attend in addition to USC students.

In conclusion, the USC Student Chapter was extremely grateful that David was able to present to our chapter. The events were well received and offered many opportunities for the members to learn from David's experience. This visit was an extremely positive experience for all parties involved.