

Dear colleagues and friends,



Time flies and it has already been a year since I was elected as the President of the ISSMGE in Seoul. I would like to thank all of you for your trust and support over the past year. Since getting elected, I have been implementing my presidential plan for improving Education, Innovation and Diversity at the ISSMGE, which was announced during my presidential address and published in last October's issue of the Bulletin. I am delighted to say that we have since made significant progress.

(i) Education—ISSMGE Virtual University

The proposed “ISSMGE virtual university” is rapidly taking shape. Under the leadership of Professors Mounir Bouassida and Kok Kwang Phoon, all existing ISSMGE webinars were reviewed and categorised for the first time into four “themed series of webinars or postgraduate courses”. The four postgraduate courses are (a) Risk Mitigation, Monitoring & Observational Methods; (b) In Situ Testing; (c) Earthquake Engineering and (d) Foundations. Each course is comprised of three to four webinars giving students and engineers a total of no less than five hours of viewing. Please visit <https://www.issmge.org/education/virtual-university> for details.

Nine new postgraduate courses have been identified. These need to be further developed by creating more relevant new webinars to give a total of no less than five hours of viewing for each course. Some VPs and relevant chairs of technical committees have nominated webinar speakers and recording is in progress. Moreover, I am pleased to announce that two webinars delivered in French are now available online for the first time. For details, please visit <https://www.issmge.org/education/recorded-webinars>.

(ii) Innovation—ISSMGE Library and Publisher

The open access policy initiated by Professor Roger Frank during his presidential term has been continued and expanded rapidly. Naturally, the open access materials would form the “ISSMGE library” as a part of the “ISSMGE virtual university”. The latest materials to appear online are the proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Unsaturated Soils held at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in August 2018. Please visit <https://www.issmge.org/publications/online-library> for more information.

Under the leadership of Professors Dimitrios Zekkos and Kok Kwang Phoon, the Innovations and Development Committee has begun exploring and developing our own

publisher — the “ISSMGE virtual publisher” — with the intention of reviewing and publishing conference papers online by our own.

I am also very pleased to inform you that a new technical committee (TC) called TC309 “Machine Learning and Big Data” has been created. The chair of this new TC is Dr Zhongqiang Liu from the Norwegian Geotechnical Society. The Vice-chair and Secretary are Mohammad Rezania from the UK and Zenon Medina-Cetina from the US, respectively. To learn more about this new TC, visit <https://www.issmge.org/committees/technical-committees/impact-on-society/machine-learning>.

(iii) Diversity

Recruiting new Corporate Associates to narrow the gap between academics and practitioners

Under the leadership of the Chair of Corporate Associates Presidential Group (CAPG), Mr Sukumar Pathmanandavel, significant progress has been made since September 2017 to narrow the divide between academics and practitioners. Moreover, we have recruited four new Corporate Associates. They are Geoharbour Group from China, GDS Instruments from Malaysia, and AOSA SA and SRK Consulting from Argentina. Following my very recent visit to Kochi, Japan, Giken Ltd has agreed to join us as our first Japanese Corporate Associate.

In addition, the CAPG together with the Young Members Presidential Group (YMPG) have been working closely with the organising committees of various conferences such as the 16th Pan-American Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (SMGE), 16th Asian Regional Conference on SMGE and the 17th European Conference on SMGE to create a dialog among geotechnical engineers around the world on matters directly affecting the welfare of the profession. The main purpose is to bridge the gap between academics and practitioners so that they may find a common understanding and take collective actions.

Creating key lecturing opportunities for young members

As our young members (less than 36 years of age) have been under-represented in major international lectures for many years, I have created the ISSMGE Bright Spark Lecture series to enable more young members to take the main stage at conferences. I would like to thank the YMPG for coming up with the wonderful title of this young members’ lecture series. Guidelines on organising these lectures can be found at <https://www.issmge.org/the-society/issmge-awards>.

The first Bright Spark Lecture was delivered by Dr Lin Dong at the 7th Technical Conference in Eastern Asia on Geo-Natural Disasters in Chengdu, China. The conference was organised by Asian Technical Committee 3. I was very pleased to attend that lecture and to present a certificate to the lecturer.



Dr Lin Dong from the Lanzhou Institute of Seismology of China Earthquake Administration receives the first “ISSMGE BRIGHT SPARK LECTURER” certificate.

Another four ISSMGE Bright Spark Lectures were delivered at the 7th International Conference on Unsaturated Soils held between 3rd and 5th August 2018 at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The

four lecturers were also presented with ISSMGE certificates.



Dr Amin Askarinejad
(TU Delft, the Netherlands)



Dr Majid Ghayoomi
(University of New Hampshire, US)



Dr Annan Zhou
(RMIT University, Australia)



Dr Chao Zhou
(HKUST, HKSAR)

Other ISSMGE Bright Spark Lectures are being planned by the YMPG and various organising committees at different conferences such as the 16th Asian Regional Conference on SMGE, the 16th Pan-American Conference on SMGE and the 17th European Conference on SMGE.

Connecting the forgotten societies and exploring new ones

Promoting soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering in different parts of the world, engaging with our existing members and reaching out to new ones are parts of my central presidential plan. One way to do so is through ISSMGE international seminars. Under the outstanding leadership of Professor Pedro Sêco e Pinto, one ISSMGE International Seminar was held in Brest (Belarus) in April 2018 and four more are confirmed to be held in November 2018 in Asunción (Paraguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Mexico City (Mexico) and León (Mexico). I would like to thank Pedro Sêco e Pinto (Portugal), Roger Frank (France), Liudas Furmonavičius (Lithuania), Nikitenko Mikhail (Belarus), Sernov Vyacheslav (Belarus), Roberto Terzariol (Argentina), Alejo Sfriso (Argentina), Tim Newson (Canada), Sukumar Pathmanandavel (Australia), Eun Chul Shin (South Korea) and Gabriel Auvinet (Mexico) for speaking at one or more of these seminars.

Looking ahead, I am confident that the ISSMGE will continue to flourish and reach new heights with the help and support from all of you.

Charles W.W. Ng

28 September 2018