

CFES Congress Report 2015



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Introduction

Before starting this report, I'd like to mention that report will only include the first two days of the 5 days event. The reason behind this is because the three last days, as VP External I had to attend mandatory CFES Events, such as plenary. The recap of such events and the duties/representation that needed to be done will be included in my Mandate report as to facilitate the incoming VP External.

This year, since Congress was in Manitoba, the ECA only budgeted enough to send two people, and as such, the VP External (Head delegate) and the President went. For future years, I would suggest bringing three people who could fill these three distinct groups; 1 representative of the ECA who is well versed in Council/Executive manners (Either the President or Vp External should usually fill this role), the second person being another member of council who is possibly looking becoming an ECA executive next year, because a lot of the sessions offered are of type "101" and are more useful for incoming executives, or possibly a president of a society. The last person should be, in my opinion, a first or second year student. My reasoning behind this is Congress is a great event to initiate a new student into what being involved with your schools association actually means. Bringing three people to Congress is probably the biggest recommendation I would make in this report.

Re-Cap of events;

Congress this year was from January 2nd to the 8th. The second being arrival day, and the eight being departure day. As most of you are aware, the cost of flying within Canada is extremely expensive, thus the flights alone cost closely to 800.00\$ each. None the less, we decided as a group to arrive early on the 2nd as to be able to settle in before getting down to business.

January 2nd;

Nothing worth mentioning happened during the first day. As we arrived around lunch time, the first real event for the head delegate was at 6:00pm which just recapped the important events that I needed to attend during Congress. They also recapped on important upcoming events such as CEC (Memorial University), IEC 2015, Conference on Diversity in Engineering (Old NCWIE) and lastly Lean 6 Sigma courses (Hosted by E.T.S. for 2 years straight now).

They also mentioned a complaint system that has been put in place since presidents meeting 2014. The complaint system was a recommendation that came out of the ICE report (Inclusive CFES Environments Task Force). This ad hock committee was created after the social uproar of certain non-ethical behaviors within engineering societies. If you would like more info on Incident Reporting System, you can visit; cfes.ca/ccs or for the ICE Report; cfes.ca/download/en/conferences/pm/2014. On cfes.ca/ccs you will also be able to see the full schedule of Congress 2015.

January 3rd;

On the second day is when things actually started. Regional meetings were always held at 9:30am. This is where we met with our regional ambassador (in our case it was Alexandra Guay, the Quebec Ambassador). During these regional meetings she would talk to us about important events today, relay any last minute information needed to be relayed from the organizing committee. We also shared our itineraries of the day, as to try and get as much people diverse into different conferences.

After our regional meetings, it was followed by a Welcome Greeting by the current CFES president ; Mathieu Boutin-Delisle, followed by CFES 101, where we were introduced on how the conference was going to be run if ever you didn't read the conference introduction package. We also had a brief overview of Do's and Don'ts of the conference.

The next event was a guest keynote speaker (Richard Hammond) which spoke about Inclusivity. The title of the speech was; The Art of Inclusivity ... And how it's not an art. The speaker tried to open our eyes on how we simply have to stop over thinking everything about inclusivity/racism/sexism, and simply do it. All the tools have been in front of us for years, there simply seems to be a reluctance to use them.

After the keynote speaker is when the conferences started. The small conferences could either be held by participating schools, or sometimes from societies within the University of Manitoba. As I did not attend every conference (as there were usually 3-4 conferences going on at once) I will only discuss the ones I personally attended. I did not receive the review of the conferences Emma Saboureau attended.

After Lunch, I attended these conferences; How to chair a meeting, CEAB information session, Toastmasters with the Roaring Lions.

How to chair a meeting;

Unfortunately this conference was extremely basic, and was designed for people who had absolutely no clue on how to chair a meeting. I was expecting a more detailed in-depth on how to be a good chair style of conference. I'm quite saddened to say that I did not get anything out of this conference, as I mostly knew everything beforehand that was mentioned in the 1 hour. We still discussed the differences and pros of having formal versus informal meetings, but how formal, and well-structured meetings will always be worth it compared to the later. Lastly, the most important thing is to have clearly set out rules for your meeting and to follow them! If there is a rule that doesn't make sense in present time, the change it instead of ignoring it.

CEAB Information Session;

The next conference was offered by the CFES President, and was entitled CEAB Information sessions. This session consisted of explaining exactly what the CEAB was, what it did, and who it answered to. The CEAB is the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board. These are the people that go around to different schools, look at the engineering programs, and accept your engineering degree as being “accredited”. What this does for the student, is that, upon graduation, he does not have to take an “entrance” exam to be able to work as a professional in his province. In Quebec’s case, if say, Concordia’s building engineering degree wasn’t credited. A graduate from this program would have to take several exams offered from the OIQ as to prove that the student has the required skills necessary to work as a professional in Quebec. He went over the recent changes in how they accredited courses now. Most universities brought up a point that they would like the CEAB to talk more to the mother associations, because most of them have positions that deal directly with the academia relations of the school, and are in a better position to fill in the gaps then random students from class. ECA echoed these same concerns.

Toastmasters with the Roaring Lions;

This session was about public speaking and how to overcome a popular fear of public speaking. We mostly did some practice exercises as to be able to come up with words on the fly instead of sounding like a monotone robot when speaking in front of an audience. I participated in the end, giving a 2 minute speech about Pop-Tarts (the choice of the subject was from the public), and had a chance to win a 5\$ gift card for Tim Horton’s. Unfortunately I only came in second and did not win. If you would like more information about possible public speaking clubs around your area, visit; www.toastmasters.org. Within the Montreal region there are more than 50 member clubs.

The rest of the day was the opening banquet followed by a social event called Toga Up. The organizing committee offered a piece of fabric for every delegate. I found this extremely useful as it saved everybody from borrowing a sheet from the hotel, which in turn could have turned into a nightmare for them.

January 4th;

On the second day, I attended these following conferences; First Impressions, BESST Information Sessions, Next Year's Objectives, VPx Crash Course, Plenary 101, and Report Review.

First Impressions;

During this conference we were introduced little tricks on how to impress an employer during the first minutes of a job interview, a meeting or any other event. A lot of the topic had to be about being dressed for the proper occasion, being well versed on the topic of discussion and not being afraid of questions.

BEST Information Sessions;

The BESST information sessions was held by the CFES president again and talked about our relations with BESST and how they could help CFES. BEST is the Board of European Student of Technology, the European equivalent to CFES. The CFES has always held a very good relationship with BEST because they are structured similarly to CFES and the help is mutual on different problems that can arise. We were made aware that all CFES members (pretty much all Engineering students in Canada) can attend courses offered by BEST during the summer. The courses all have some technical aspect that can aid you in some way. It is common that we send a delegate to the BEST annual Congress (usually the president or somebody of the executive committee of CFES) as we usually receive a guest from BEST at our congress. This year it was the representative from the Netherlands that was at our congress.

Next Year's Objectives/VPx Crash Course/Plenary 101/Report Review/Mat's Meeting;

The next 4 information sessions are globed together, as they are all intra related, and where mandatory for the head delegates of the Congress.

The rest of the this day will be brief about these events as they will fall under the Vp External mandate and will be covered in my mandate report as well.

In next year's objectives, we discussed possible action plans for the to be elected officials of CFES. This is a new sessions as before, the only time member schools could give input to the executive was at President's meeting, which is held during September. The problem with this is that from September to May there is very little time to input new things. This is why this session was created as to

allow members schools to give input to CFES even before knowing who the executive team would be next year.

The VPx Crash course consisted of giving up to date know-hows about CFES policies and such. We also used this time to discuss what the role of the VP External was for every school. We can see a distinct difference between big schools and smaller ones. The VP external tends to have a much bigger job in larger schools than smaller ones.

Plenary 101 was used to introduce/refresh us on how exactly plenary was going to be held. Plenary for CFES is like ECA council. It is the time allotted to mandate CFES officially. We were also reminded that the rest of Congress we had specific events to attend, such as plenary, etc.

Report review is a session where we are allowed to review the reports of the officers/ad hoc committee and provide final feedback before their terms end. It is like a last resort as to provide any desired changes from the executive committee of CFES.

Mat's Meeting is where the president of CFES (called Mat) takes time to explain what the national executive feel should be done for the following years, and hear feedback from member schools if they echoed the same interest as the national executive. This is important because it will allow the outgoing executives to drive the incoming executives the right direction for their mandates.

January 5th;

The only event I attended except plenary (which last from 11am till 6:30pm) was a round table discussion. These round table discussions served to meet with schools that had similar structure/student size as your own association and discuss about problems, solutions, and interesting events happening. I take great pride in saying that, Quebec engineering school associations are among the best run associations around Canada as we compare ourselves to other schools. Another school that is extremely well driven within their association is UBC's EUS. Other than that, we at the ECA did not have much to retain from these meetings, as QCESO (CRÉIQ) serves as a better platform for us.

January 6th;

Election speeches were heard from candidates for national executive position and for holding CFES events during the morning. Most of the Candidates ran un-opposed.

During lunch time, there was a closed session where we did accountability of the CFES team. Meaning we had a chance, without getting named, to provide unanimous feedback to the national executive without them knowing who it came from. On the ECA's behalf, I noted that our Regional Ambassador did an excellent job in keeping the Quebec schools in the loop of what was happening in CFES and had no criticism for her, except keep up the good work.

The rest of the day was used to write counter-proposals for motions that were contentious during the first round of plenary.

January 7th;

I spent the whole day in the second session of plenary pounding out motions. The ECA presented/modified at least 10 motions. It should be noted, that during this congress over 70 motions were presented, this explaining why the plenary session was extremely long.

On this last night, an ECA kilt was auctioned off as well, and it brought back over 300\$ for a local Manitoban charity! 😊

Conclusion

Overall, I believe CFES Congress is important, however, I believe sending three different types of delegates would be extremely worthwhile for the ECA. See introduction for more information on who I think we should send.