**SECTION AND BRANCH EXCHANGE NOTES from APRIL 2 and 7, 2020**

**April 2 Attendees:**

 

**Topics discussed:**

* Section/Branch COVID-19 Support
* Recommendations on how to encourage member participation for Sections and Branches with a large physical geography
* Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices
* Tips for staying engaged while working remotely
* Share your most successful Section/Branch event
* Strategies for effective student transition to Younger Member
* Membership surveys

**SECTION/BRANCH COVID-19 SUPPORT**

* Henry Haselton: The Seattle Section started a photo contest and will give away gift cards for food delivery. Photos would depict of what it’s like working from home. The Section is also pursuing a program which would include a panel discussion with heads of firms and public agencies to hear measures taken, and how they are handling this crisis from a local standpoint

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* Andi Berendt: The Denver Branch holds biweekly virtual Branch meetings using Zoom, no charge, PDHs are offered with onus on members to request paperwork (Colorado does not have PDH requirements). 100 registered versus 80s typically for in person meetings.

(ASCE has a Speakers Bureau with topics and speakers as a resource). <https://www.asce.org/participate-online-speakers-bureau/>

The Denver Branch gives out 3 senior awards for their Student Chapters. They are increasing the awards amount and publicizing the names on social media. They’ll be conducting the interviews by phone with the prospective applicants.

* Sean Merrell: The Dallas Branch is hosting their next meeting online at no charge, but thinks a nominal fee would be appropriate, at least to cover costs. The Texas Section is in contact with ACEC and AGC to request the Governor to name engineering services as essential so design and construction efforts may proceed. State Government Relations can also offer guidance. ASCE is drafting an advocacy piece for why we think engineering should be an essential service.

* Hannah Albertus-Benham: The Minnesota Section Is looking into interactive websites for open discussion to address needs of students and younger members, pointing out local and Society resources, licensure renewal opportunities. They are engaging with adjacent Sections and Branches to engage more people.
* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch response scenario to their Tornado victims could apply to COVID-19 victims. In the case of the tornado, the proceeds from their cancelled March meeting were donated to tornado victims.
* Melissa Wheeler from the Georgia Section noted that Citizens of Georgia Power physically volunteer for charities, volunteer to mentor subjects online for students out of school. This idea could be applied to Sections and Branches.
* Megan McDonald: The Illinois Section is awarding student scholarships that were reviewed and approved and will publicize winners with headshots and bios online and in their newsletter. It was suggested that checks be sent directly to school and not directly to the recipient.

**Recommendations on how to encourage member participation for branches with a large physical geography**

* Monica Sartain, Nashville Branch: Move meetings around geographically, poll members for location interest. Offer video and call in alternatives (which may be a takeaway from COVID-19 virtual accommodations).

**diversity and inclusion best practices**

* Suzanne Herron: The Nashville Branch’s Committee on Diversity & Inclusion along with the Younger Member Group hosted a presentation on diversity and inclusion hosted at historically black college with networking time, panel speaker discussion, and attendee questions. Student chapters were also invited
* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch hosted a “Day at the Park” and attracts around 20-30 attendees.

**most successful Section/Branch event**

* Andi Berendt: The Denver Branch hosted a large meeting highlighting major area project of reconstruction of interstate highway.
* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch hosted a roundtable discussion with elected officials and FHWA representatives to discuss gas tax increase and funding.

**STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITION FROM STUDENT TO YOUNGER MEMBER**

* Megan McDonald, Illinois Section - You need approach the students with an active outreach committee. Resume writing workshop and workbook to help get jobs, mentorship program pairing students with professionals and bringing them to local ASCE meetings with someone they know.
* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch hosts a student competition in concert with their annual meeting. They promote sliding scale of membership dues for graduating students while still in school and try to obtain a non-school email address so they can still be plugged in after graduation.

**MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS**

* Sean Merrell, Dallas Branch - Ask meaningful questions (ie: what times of day would be desirable for meetings), survey should take less than five minutes for responses, incentivize with a gift card drawing for participation, conduct survey biannually
* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch surveys board members to encourage better board meeting attendance, especially with changes in leadership and different schedules. They also survey members at meetings asking them to log into an application and answer questions directly before and after the meeting.
* Section and Branch Best Practices Guide has survey examples.

**SECTION AND BRANCH EXCHANGE NOTES from APRIL 2 and 7, 2020**

**April 7 Attendees:**

 

**Topics discussed:**

Section/Branch COVID-19 Support

* Chas Webb : The Eastern (NC) Branch is doing a Zoom meeting and is asking for a $10.00 donation which will be donated to a local charity.
* Lindsay O’Leary: The Dallas Branch is recording their webinar and will post it on YouTube for viewing by all Texas Section members. Attendees can obtain PDH’s by providing a code word at the end of the meeting
* Josh Johnston: The Oklahoma Section is exploring the possibility of conducting their Annual Conference virtually.
* LTC is putting together a webinar on effective virtual best practices and would like to participate in virtual meetings of Sections and Branches. ASCE is sponsoring a virtual webinar call Thursday at 3 which talks about how employees and employers are dealing with the pandemic.
* Lindsay O’Leary: The Texas Section suggested a mentoring team be assembled to speak to graduating students about the uncertain economy or lessons learned about those who experienced a recession.
* Lauren Swett: The Maine Section conducted a virtual scavenger hunt with a list of items that members need to find in their homes or neighborhoods. This is a fun activity intended to keep them engaged.
* Clay Forister from the Houston Branch shared that the main draw for many meetings are PDHs, so he encouraged Sections and Branches to find ways to continue delivering PDHs.

**HOW TO ENCOURAGE MEMBER PARTICIPATION FOR SECTIONS AND BRANCHES WITH A LARGE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY**

* Monica Sartain: The Nashville Branch suggested rotating the meeting location as well as survey the members to identify their day and time preference.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BEST PRACTICES**

* Edith Martinez-Guerra: The Mississippi Section held a virtual panel on Minority Women in STEM with panelists from different backgrounds and industry
* Lauren Swett: The Maine Section joins together with other groups on diversity issues and programs.

**TIPS FOR STAYING ENGAGED WHILE WORKING REMOTELY**

* Russ Nygaard: The Capital Branch of the Sacramento Section suggests that attendees to use their video camera to make the meeting more personable.
* One suggestion for working remotely was to have a distinct start and finish helps organize your day.

**SHARE YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL SECTION/BRANCH EVENT**

* Russ Nygaard: The Capital Branch of the Sacramento Section held a recent meeting with a panel discussion on Smart technology and where Transportation is going with it. The panel included people with different perspectives to help encourage questions/discussions. The meeting was very well attended.

* Clay Forister and Tim Newton reported that the Houston Branch held an Infrastructure Day with the local PBS station covering the event. They had roundtable discussions on how to fix their infrastructure. They partnered with the League of Women Voters. They had several past Branch Presidents organized the event. It was also a child-friendly event.

**STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT TRANSITION TO YOUNGER MEMBER**

* Clay Forister: The Houston Branch is talking about inviting Students to the Branch meeting to keep them engaged. Mentoring is an excellent opportunity to welcome and embrace them.
* Russ Nygaard: The Sacramento Section, Capital Branch has an active Younger Member Group and is struggling getting the YM’s to become engaged in the Branch. One idea was to include a Younger Member track at an annual meeting.
* Megan McDonald, Illinois Section: The Section needs to approach students with an active outreach

plan. Resume writing workshops may help the students obtain jobs. Mentorship program help pair students with professionals and may result in bringing them to local ASCE meetings with someone they know.

The Illinois Section YMG has their own budget and host their own technical seminars. The Younger Members have a track to move through the Section Board.

* Julia Clark: The Houston Branch board has a seat for a Younger Member.

**ENERGIZING STRUGGLING SECTIONS AND BRANCHES**

* Survey members in order to determine preferences is always recommended.
* Russ Nygaard: The Sacramento Section solicits member feedback via a written poll every month at their membership meetings. They also raffle out a free lunch to those who fill out the form and identify themselves.
* The Houston Branch sent out a membership survey for feedback and gave out a gift card in a drawing.
* Clay Forister from the Houston Branch suggested reaching out to larger area employers and seek Champions that will support employee involvement.

**INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARDS**

* Lauren Swett: The Maine Section is in the process of revising the Report Card. Prior to pandemic, they held a face-to-face kick-off meeting. They found success in holding virtual meetings to check in and see how things are working.
* Edith Martinez-Guerra: The Mississippi Section did their last Report Card two years ago, and have begun early discussions about an update.
* Chris Jennings: The Colorado Section just updated and released about 2 months ago. They struggled with outreach to elected officials.
* Russ Nygaard: The California Sections choose a senator or representative to honor as an outspoken infrastructure supporter at the release event.
* Megan McDonald; The Illinois Section is getting ready to start a 3rd Report Card update to publish in 2022. Their committee has done a great job in reaching out, and it has been viewed favorable by legislators.
* Lindsay O’Leary: The Texas Section kicked off plans for 2021 report card update. ASCE has resources ASCE has through their government relations team. It was suggested once you have one legislatives support to use that person to gain support from others.