

USSD Young Professionals Committee Charter

Revised 3/25/19

Committee Description

The primary role of the USSD Committee on Young Professionals is to increase membership and participation of young professionals, defined as members 35 years of age and under, within USSD. It is the committee's vision that increasing organization involvement of this demographic provides long-term sustainability of USSD by providing connections, experiences, and opportunities which invest participants in the future of the organization. The YP Committee is one of the Standing Operating Committees established to promote and carry out USSD's objectives as well as to foster participation in other aspects of the organization, particularly through technical committees, conference presentations, and workshops.

Terms of Reference

The Young Professionals (YP) Committee was established by the Board of Directors in 2013. The committee is charged with increasing YP involvement within USSD by both attracting new YP members and establishing long-term investment by YPs in the dams and levees industry. Committee responsibilities include: planning YP events for the annual conferences, developing YP-exclusive opportunities, supporting organizational initiatives, and providing a channel of communication between USSD and YPs. The committee also assists in promoting YP initiatives within ICOLD. The Committee leadership keeps the general membership informed of activities and member accomplishments through contributions to the official newsletter, input to the committees section of the USSD website, quarterly meetings, and regular emails. The Committee also collaborates with and/or assist other committees in developing and promoting education and training under the four imperatives of the Strategic Plan: Advocate, Educate, Collaborate, and Cultivate.

Background and History

YP meet-ups began at the 2010 Conference with an informal dessert reception organized by Manoshree Sundaram. These receptions continued for three years with annual growth in attendance. In 2013, Amanda Sutter chartered the official creation of the YP Committee and hosted the first meeting at the Conference, where Brandan Vavrek and Emily Schwartz were volunteered as Co-Vice Chairs. Under Amanda's leadership, the committee made great strides, increasing the committee size (based on email subscriptions) to over 200. This leadership team oversaw the implementation of a YP Vice Chair on each committee, networking socials, workshops, student outreach, the addition YP Board Advisors, and ever-growing participation and presence of YPs within the committee and overall conference. In 2017, Amanda Sutter stepped down as chair and Brandan Vavrek became the new chair as of the 2017 Annual Conference in Anaheim. To maintain a three-person leadership team, an election was held from nominations solicited from the Committee to select the new Co-Vice Chair. Aimee Corn was elected in mid-2017 through a general vote submitted to the full Committee.

Responsibilities

This committee is responsible for promoting YP initiatives and planning YP events at the annual conferences. This includes maintaining YP positions on other committees, ensuring YP members are involved throughout USSD, and maintaining YP Board Advisor positions. Additionally, this committee believes that educating YPs ensures the future success of the dams and levees industry, and thereby

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fosters opportunities for YPs to develop both technical and “soft” skills. Finally, the YP Committee advocates and encourages diversity throughout all facets of USSD.

Leadership

Chair: Emily Schwartz

Vice Chairs: Aimee Corn and (vacant)

Subcommittee Chair - Student Outreach: Ali Reza Firoozfar

YP Board Advisors: Melinda Dirdal, Tina Stanard, and Brandan Vavrek

Goals and Objectives

Specific goals and objectives for a three-year period which began in 2018:

Advocate

1. Encourage current YP members to attend and actively participate in USSD events.
2. Endeavor to create a diverse, inclusive, and open community where all USSD members are valued, respected, and welcomed as part of the community. The committee’s efforts are focused toward junior-level professionals but restrictions due to age are limited to the greatest extent practicable.

Educate

1. Encourage technical paper writing and presentations from YP through advertisement of the young professional paper award.
2. Promote involvement of YPs through the use of USSD publications.
3. Provide an opportunity for knowledge transfer and prepare USSD for the next generation, ensuring the long-term future of USSD and the industry at large. This includes facilitation of mentorship but may not include a formal mentoring program.
4. Support workshops within the YP Committee or in collaboration with other committees to improve and develop both technical and “soft” skills.

Collaborate

1. Encourage chairpersons of other committees to attend YP functions to introduce their committees to the YPs and offer inclusion in committee activities.
2. Maintain representation on all technical committees, at least one Young Professional per committee.
3. Provide an opportunity for the younger professionals to connect with each other to enable sharing of experiences.

Cultivate

1. Solicit comments and suggestions from YP members to improve their experience.
2. Work with annual meeting organizing committee to ensure that there are events for Young Professionals to meet and network with each other.
3. Recruit new young members from various backgrounds such as academic (including students at all levels), regulatory, owners, construction, suppliers, practitioners, etc.

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4. Provide broader recognition for YPs who demonstrates leadership, integrity, industry excellence, and commitment to USSD with a YP of the Year award.

Membership

Committee membership is in constantly flux. Since this is the committee for young members, new members are regularly joining and age out. Also, being less experienced, the same members are not always able to attend meetings. The current email distribution list has over 350 YPs and is regularly updated based on conference attendance and USSD Membership registration.

Student Outreach Subcommittee

During the committee meeting at the 2018 Conference, the committee voted to establish a Student Outreach subcommittee. This subcommittee's purpose is to recruit and sponsor students and encourage faculty from nearby universities (focused on relevant civil engineering programs) to attend and participate in the annual conference. The goal is to recruit students to USSD as well as to encourage academic participation across all facets of USSD.

The responsibilities will include: obtaining sponsorship from the USSD individual and/or corporate members to cover or offset students' cost of attending the conference, working with faculty to advertise the conference to students and demonstrate the value of joining USSD, work with universities to provide stipends and assist in covering the cost of the conference, and potentially coordinate transportation to the conference. Through this work, the YP Committee hopes that USSD membership and conferences includes more members of academia, both students and faculty, in an effort to both remain current with technical research as well as to encourage students to join the dams and levees industry.