CEE USAB Spring

Forum 04/09/2024 Report

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Introduction to USAB

The Undergraduate Student Advisory Board (USAB) is a group of undergraduate Civil Engineering & Environmental Engineering students who serve as a voice for the undergraduate students of the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at the University of Washington. Its main work includes attending the Department’s Undergraduate Education Committee & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to represent the students. USAB also hosts its own events, such as the Spring Forum. Learn more about USAB here: https://www.ce.washington.edu/current/student-advisory-board.

Purpose of Spring Forum

The Spring Forum is an event hosted by USAB every spring quarter. Its purpose is to provide a platform for undergraduate students to give suggestions for how the department could be improved and voice concerns over the department. It is also an opportunity for them to give suggestions for events the department could hold or things the department is doing a good job of. The Spring Forum typically falls near the start of the quarter and lasts a couple hours. Catering is provided.

General Meeting Information

The 2024 Spring Forum took place on Tuesday, April 9th, 2024 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm in More Hall Room 234. For catering, pizza was provided. There were a total of 16 attendees; five of them were members of USAB and 11 of them were CEE undergraduate students. Of the attendees, 12 were juniors studying Civil Engineering, three were seniors studying Environmental Engineering, and one was a senior studying Civil Engineering.

Results

Computer lab improvements. Suggestions for improvements to More Hall’s computer labs were given. The main ones were: regular restock of whiteboard markers and tissues; free printing; and new chairs.

Feedback form. An anonymous department feedback form was requested. It would be to provide feedback about More Hall and the CEE Department year-round. USAB historically did
have an anonymous feedback form for undergraduate students, and is currently working on getting it back up and running again.

**Department events feedback.** The attendees stated that overall they enjoyed the department’s social events. With regards to the Work From Campus Days, some attendees stated that they would like it if the lengths were extended by about an hour or so. One of the environmental engineering students in attendance stated that they feel that there is a disconnect between the civil & environmental engineering students and that with the social events there should be some specific way for them to meet each other.

**College of Engineering course fee.** This was the discussed topic which the attendees were the most outspoken and upset about. They felt that the course fee was a lot of extra tuition that future CEE undergraduate students would have to pay for, and they said that they wanted more information about how specifically the course fee would benefit the CEE Department. Unfortunately, USAB’s understanding of the course fee is limited as well, and is hoping to get more information from the Undergraduate Education Committee.

**Career fairs.** Overall, the attendees stated that they thought the career fairs they had been to went well. Some said that they would prefer to have the career fairs later in the school year. However, the fall is when companies are recruiting the most, so this seems unlikely to change.

**CEE 440.** The general consensus by the attendees was that CEE 440 - Professional Practice Studio is not a useful class and needs to be changed. There were many suggestions given for how the class could be improved. Some suggestions were: have a final exam; have department group presentations (e.g. structures, environmental); have a field trip; & have the class earlier in the day.

**Environmental engineer career options.** The environmental engineering attendees said that they felt they weren’t sure what they wanted to do career-wise. They stated that they would like it if there was more guidance given to the environmental engineering students regarding career options for them after college.

**CEE Department enrollment.** Some suggestions were given for how the CEE Department could increase enrollment. The main two suggestions were to encourage students in the department to join the College of Engineering’s Emerging Leaders in Engineering program to encourage students to join the department, as well as to sell more merchandise.
ASCE. The attendees said they would like it if ASCE held regular events and if ASCE could have a membership system rather than the ASB-type system it currently has.

Conclusion

The information gathered from the Spring Forum will be very useful to USAB in several ways. First, it will be presented to faculty (both the Undergraduate Education & DEI Committees) which will help the faculty improve the department for undergraduate students. Next, it will give future USAB members a good idea of some of the main changes that can be made to improve the experience of the undergraduate students. USAB would like to thank all of the attendees of the Spring Forum. Please send any questions or comments about the Spring Forum to ceeusab@uw.edu. Thank you.