PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT!

DR. LIZHI SUN
Civil and Environmental Engineering; Professor & Vice Chair

Q: What are your favorite past times and hobbies?
A: I play ping pong a lot. I have a ping pong table in my garage and I frequently play with my kids.

Q: Where did you receive your degrees?
A: My undergraduate was done in China at Zhejiang University and my major was Engineering Mechanics, a more fundamental mechanics instead of structures. Then I got a Masters Degree in Solid Mechanics at Peking University. Then I spent a few years as a researcher at the Research institute until I joined UCLA’s graduate program in Civil Engineering for another master’s degree and a PhD focusing on materials. My undergraduate was done in China at Zhejiang University and my major was Engineering Mechanics, a more fundamental mechanics instead of structures. Then I got a Masters Degree in Solid Mechanics at Peking University. Then I spent a few years as a researcher at the Research institute until I joined UCLA’s graduate program in Civil Engineering for another master’s degree and a PhD focusing on materials.

Q: What courses do you teach?
A: The first course I taught was statics (CEE 30). Now I also teach an undergraduate elective course for structural engineering in spring called Computer Methods in Structural Engineering Design (CEE 152). In addition to those I normally teach a graduate level class called Finite Element Methods.

Q: What has been the biggest obstacle you faced as a student?
A: I think English probably. I started learning English in high school but when I came to the US I did not know how to evaluate how well I was doing. It’s a continuing process. Technically, I have no problem but sometimes it is difficult to effectively communicate. Communication is very important.

Q: When you first entered college, is this where you thought you would end up?
A: No. When I was a high school student I was mainly interested in math. My math teacher encouraged me to continue in math but I later thought math was too pure, too narrow. Meanwhile China is going through its reform process and they were encouraging people to become engineers. So someone advised me that engineering mechanics might be the best way to go but I didn’t think about it too much. Later my professors encouraged me to continue on for my masters. Most my classmates found a job so I started working in the national research institute. I never thought I would become a professor until my advisor at UCLA strongly encouraged me to become a faculty member. I thought it was a good idea because I could do whatever I liked in research.

Q: What brought you to UCI.
A: I liked LA. I was born in North East part of China which has weather very similar to a place like China. In 1999 I got a job at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. We liked it there. It was a very nice city and the people were very nice too. The environment was very good. Later I got offered a position here and I took it for two reasons: it was a very good opportunity and my family, especially my wife, liked the southern California climate.

Q: Can you summarize your current research?
A: Mechanics of Materials is my major field of focus. There was, and is, a major trend to focus on nano materials. For civil engineering we are looking at carbon nanotubes in polymers. President Clinton once said “there is a material that is 10 times stronger than steel, however the weight is only a fraction of steel.” It is a very promising field. Later on I started looking at medicine and life science. Since 2003, I’ve been trying to use my knowledge in mechanics to look at cancers. CT scans and MRIs can recognize if a tumor is malignant based on the stiffness of the material.

S U R V EY I N G  K I C K-OFF  P R A C T I C E S

The surveying team, captained by Rachel Goossens, had its first meeting and practice at RBF last Thursday, where a tutorial on how to use a theodolite was given. A theodolite is an instrument which allows surveyors to measure vertical and horizontal angles and along with the use of other surveying tools, surveyors can map out areas and determine boundaries and distances. While the use of a standard theodolite is thought to be as archaic as the use of a slide rule, it is still a good skill to learn and will be vital to the surveying team this year at conference. The surveying team will be competing to survey an area as quickly and as accurately as possible. Competition will be tough since some schools have surveying courses and majors. UCI will be a force to be reckoned with as the team gains experience surveying the hilly and tree infested terrain of Aldrich Park. The next practice will be held at RBF again this Thursday at 3pm and all those with an interest in surveying are welcome to attend! If a ride is needed contact Rachel at rgoossen@uci.edu.
ELECTIONS!!

Elections for ASCE UCI Board 2010-2011 are coming up! The board positions are President, Vice President of External Affairs, Vice President of Internal Affairs, Treasurer, and Secretary. The President oversees all aspects of the organization and the External VP deals directly with sponsors and groups outside of UCI while the Internal VP deals with groups and individuals within the school. Email us with the position you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for! We will be accepting nominations until Wednesday March 3rd, applications through Friday March 5th, and elections will take place on Wednesday March 10th during the general meeting. Applications consist of a resume and a short 4-6 minute speech, which you will give on the 10th, highlighting the following:

- Why you are qualified for the position and what experience you have
- Aspirations you have for the position and the chapter
- Your Past involvement with ASCE

Be prepared to answer questions pertaining to your qualifications. If you have any questions, please email us and we will forward your questions to the appropriate position. Best of luck to all applicants!!

STEEL BRIDGE AND CONCRETE CANOE

Concrete Canoe just had a successful pour day on February 20th and started the 28 day cure process for concrete. Thanks to everyone that came out!! Now, once this is over, all that’s left to do is sand down the boat and get things ready for Conference! Those on the rowing team, continue to make it out to practices as there is only a month left to train for the races. Also, start thinking of a theme for the canoe team!! If you have any cool ideas email the concrete canoe captains!

Steel Bridge has begun to construct the bridge parts, and everyone’s help is needed. These next few weeks, the captains will be in the Structures Lab almost all the time, so contact them if you are interested in coming out to help. Keep in mind that the construction teams for conference has not been determined yet, so if you want to be considered for the team, you should come help out all the time!

RUBY’S FUNDRAISER
THURSDAY MARCH 4, 4-9 PM
4602 BARRANCE PKWY, IRVINE, CA 92604

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS?

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