

GeoEngineering Earthquake Reconnaissance (GEER) Association
under the sponsorship of the National Science Foundation (NSF)

GEER Steering Committee (SC) Meeting held at the ASCE GEESD IV Conference in Sacramento, CA
05/20/08 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm PST

Meeting Summary

Meeting Attendees: Jon Bray, David Frost, Rob Kayen, Ellen Rathje, and Les Youd

1. Response to the M=7.9 Eastern Sichuan, China Earthquake

This is a major earthquake event that demands a response from GEER. There are numerous geo-aspects of this event, including surface fault rupture, site effects, liquefaction, dam and levee performance, and landslides. Coordination is ongoing with NSF, other NEHRP agencies, including NIST and USGS, EERI LFE, and ASCE TCLEE. David Frost will lead the GEER team responding to this event. GEER SC members agreed to provide funding for at least a four member team from GEER with the hope that NEHRP will provide support for a larger coordinated effort of earthquake professionals. It is our hope that GEER can play a major role in this enterprise with its focus on the important geo-aspects of the event.

2. GEER Activities at GEESD IV

The GEER session at the GEESD IV conference, which preceded this SC meeting (i.e., 10:30 to 12:00 on Tuesday, May 20, 2008), was very well-attended and a great success. David Frost started with an overview of recent developments in post-earthquake reconnaissance technology. Les Youd discussed the advantages of improved coordination with other organizations, such as EERI LFE, but warned of the need to stay independent in some aspects. Jon Bray provided an overview of the GEER activity and encouraged those in attendance to join GEER if they were not already a member. A summary of recent post-earthquake reconnaissance was presented. Adrian Rodriguez-Marek presented the results of the GEER team survey of the August 15, 2007 Ica-Pisco, Peru earthquake, and Rob Kayen presented the results of the GEER team survey of the July, 16 2007 Niigata Chuetsu-Oki, Japan earthquake. A panel discussion ensued, with good discussion from the people attending the session.

At the NEES and Equipment Demonstrations at the Center for Geotechnical modeling at UC Davis, equipment that is used for post-earthquake reconnaissance, such as ground-based LiDAR, were demonstrated largely through the efforts of Rob Kayen of the USGS.

3. Visibility of GEER and its Role in NEHRP

The earthquake professional's response to the recent major earthquake in China indicates that many individuals are now aware of GEER and its capabilities. Early in the process, GEER was involved in developing a coordinated U.S. response to this earthquake, and key individuals at NEHRP agencies worked with GEER SC members in developing their agency's response. The excellent attendance at the GEESD IV Conference session on GEER is another good indicator of GEER's increased visibility. However, GEER SC members agreed that we should look for additional ways to increase the visibility of GEER and its accomplishments.

There was additional discussion of the role of GEER in NEHRP post-earthquake reconnaissance. The push toward discipline-oriented in-depth reconnaissance coupled with a broader interdisciplinary coordination by the lead NEHRP agency is seen as a good path forward. GEER has and can continue to perform in-depth, innovative post-earthquake reconnaissance of the geo-aspects of earthquakes.

4. Other Issues

Efforts on the post-earthquake reconnaissance guidance document, GEER response plan, and preparation for the upcoming GEER SC/AP workshop in October 2008 should continue, and a teleconference should be scheduled in the summer of 2008 to move forward on these and other issues.