

EUROPEAN STUDENT CHAPTERS RAISING THE BAR: THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCES STUDENT CONFERENCE IN KRAKOW, POLAND

The idea to hold an international student event by our student geophysical society at AGH University in Krakow, Poland, was a result of the event staged by the SEG Bucharest Student Chapter in 2010. We appreciated their courage in organizing an event similar to the AAPG/SEG Student Expo series in the United States, and we also wanted to recognize the potential in the students' endeavors. We believed, just as our colleges from Romania, that Europe deserves an annual event of this kind and we were lucky to have our Romanian friends as the pioneers. They pulled off the 1st SEG/AAPG/EAGE International Geosciences Student Conference (IGSC) in Bucharest Romania in April 2010. This first IGSC was envisioned, constructed, and implemented by students and we certainly had some big shoes to fill.

AGH's vision for the 2011 conference was for students, scientists, and industry representatives to present their latest work and its applications in geosciences. The ultimate goal was to facilitate the start of careers in geosciences and enable students to present their achievements in conference conditions.

The 2nd International Geosciences Student Conference kicked off 9 July 2011 at the Faculty of Geology, Geophysics and Environmental Protection at AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow. The Opening Ceremony welcomed students, industry recruiters, academic professionals, and collaborating society representatives. Our honorary patronage for the 2nd IGSC was lead by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Barbara Kurdrycka; Voivode of Lesser Poland Voivodeship, Stanislaw Kracik; and Krakow Mayor Jacek Majchrowski. Representing the sponsoring societies were Elsa Velasco and Callie Lee-Petricek (SEG), Wan-Min Huang (EAGE), and Eugen Tudor (AAPG). We owe special thanks to our corporate sponsors: Orlen Upstream, Geofizyka Krakow, Total, Shell, the Polish Geophysical Institute, Microseismic, Aurelian Oil, Polish Academy of Sciences, Maersk Oil, Geofizyka Torun, Chevron, and Newgas Contracting. The conference received coverage by local news media and the Polish Petroleum Club Magazine.

As the conference kicked off, my thoughts became similar to my experience running marathons. Have you ever tried to run a marathon? The first 30 kilometers are easy. The problems start when you are close to the finish line. After a couple of hours of constant exhausted running, you are barely able to take the next step forward but the best part awaits you at



Student participants of the conference in the exhibition hall at AGH University.

the finish line. This is exactly what we felt after the opening ceremony of our conference!

The conference drew 158 students from 16 different countries, who presented 33 oral and 25 poster presentations. The oil and gas industry was represented by 42 professionals who conducted interviews, presented courses, and represented their companies in the booths on the exhibition floor. The three supporting associations (SEG, AAPG, and EAGE) had booths in the

exhibition hall and provided considerable support.

The Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Geological Institute displayed their latest techniques and projects. Poland recently has become an area of intense shale gas exploration and the students had the opportunity to learn about the shale gas potential from these organizations. Piotr Krzywiec, a professor at AGH, gave a wonderful presentation on the philosophy of SPAN projects and challenges connected with the first large-scale onshore project, PolandSPAN, recently launched by the Polish Geological Institute.

Short courses and lectures were offered during the conference to more than 130 students; courses were given by Maersk Oil, Shell, Geofizyka Krakow, and Newgas Contracting. The Maersk Oil short course was devoted to seismic interpretation with a brief introduction to structural geology followed by hands-on exercises in seismic interpretation. Shell's course covered the recent topic of unconventional hydrocarbons exploration and the challenges to commercially find and produce them. Teamwork exercises gave students an idea of practical aspects of particular parameters and locating sweet spots. A highlight was Shell's curriculum vitae clinic. It created great interest among students, particularly because of the practical advice on specific features of a perfect resume. Our local partner, Geofizyka Krakow, sponsored a short course about modern 3D seismic interpretation for hydrocarbon exploration. A brief history of seismic hydrocarbon in Poland was followed by exercises in structural interpretation and well placement based on attributes maps. We also received superb lectures from Lucy MacGregor (SEG Honorary Lecturer), Anatoly Zolotukhin (EAGE Lecturer), and a special lecture from Pascal Breton of Total titled "What is the energy future after the world oil production peak?" The lecture gave students a better understanding of the challenges that lie ahead in their professional careers.

Thanks to ExxonMobil and the instructors in the SEG/ExxonMobil Student Education Program (SEP) who joined us in Poland for the Europe SEP following the IGSC. This

2-day program helped prepare 33 young geoscientists from universities all over Europe for the breadth and challenges of a petroleum industry career. “Thanks to the experience of the SEP instructors from ExxonMobil and their commitment to share this experience with us, we received an excellent training of how to integrate multidisciplinary subsurface data from plate to pore scale in exploration and production,” said Aurelian Roeser, from Freie Universitat Berlin, Germany. He added, “By studying play trends, verifying play elements, calculating seismic data acquisition geometries, interpreting seismic profiles as well as analyzing well logs and seismic attributes, we learned that even minute changes on a single element of the data set might alter the whole system of interpretation. However, working as a team of motivated young leaders with excellent technical skills was the key to a well-founded final proposal on how to develop an oil and gas field. And by the way, this was so much fun!”

The third day of the conference featured the regional SEG Challenge Bowl with 13 teams participating. Volodya Hlebnikov (University of Mining and Geology St. Ivan Rilski, Bulgaria) and Emmanuel Uzuegbu (University of Stavanger) won and will represent Europe in the 6th Annual SEG Challenge Bowl finals in September at SEG’s Annual International Meeting.

After the intense competition of the Challenge Bowl, students relaxed on the last day with field trips to the Wieliczka salt mine and Kasprowy Wierch (a mountain in the Western Tates on the border of Poland and Slovakia). Wieliczka salt mine is the seventh oldest working enterprise in Europe and

the world’s 14th oldest company still in operation.

“On one hand, the conference was an excellent place to get to know and share with other students with similar interests—to hear what are they doing and how are they doing it. It was also a great place to learn from today’s professionals by the many interesting lectures and courses they provided,” said Maria Garcia Juanatey from Uppsala University, Sweden.

I would particularly like to thank my right-hand man, Robert Cieplicki, and my colleagues at AGH for their support and time. We could not have pulled this off with just a team of two!

As gifts and flowers were passed out during the closing ceremony and this wonderful experience was coming to an end, I finally knew I was at the finish line of the marathon—exhausted, but at the same time, happy and satisfied. Those who have finished a marathon know that regardless of how tired you are, you just want more. We will be happy to serve as advisors as we pass the baton of excellence to the University of Belgrade SEG Student Chapter which is organizing the 3rd IGSC. See you in Belgrade 2012! **TLE**

—PIOTR KURNIK,
President, SEG Student Chapter,
AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, Poland

Perspective from a faculty advisor

I am not able to think about the conference as just an event in which I participated. I think about the conference through the experience of people who organized it.

First, I had the chance to observe how the idea of the conference was conceived and how it was grown. Then came the conference itself. Everybody was on duty—excited, focused, nervous, and tired. I could see a whole spectrum of emotions, from hope and excitement to frustration and even breakdown. I know the price they paid.

Secondly, although I did not serve on the organizing team, I worked closely with many conference affairs as a faculty advisor and as a representative of the Foundation of AGH University. I was not responsible for anything specific, but I was ready to give my students a hand whenever needed.

Ultimately, they made me proud. Their attitude, professionalism, commitment, and team spirit amazed me. The simple fact that they managed to gather so many geophysical companies and associations in Krakow means something. Thanks to these young, wonderful people, I experienced a great moment in my life. They showed that they can create reality; they are brave and do not pay attention to the stereotypes and barriers. They proved that they deserve the best in their future lives.

—KAMILA WAWRZYNIAK-GUZ,
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