

History of IEM–YES

(1967 to Present)



by Engr. Navinderan
Mageswaran

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

The history of the G&S Section can be traced back to 1967. The idea of a G&S Section in IEM was first mooted in 1967 and a meeting was called for interested graduates and students. However, only one student turned up and the proposal was shelved.

Towards the end of 1969, as a result of discussions to reduce the membership fees for student members, the idea of a G&S Section was revived. The chief catalysts were engineering graduates of University of Malaya (UM), the only local university to offer engineering courses back then. Ir. Cheah Kok Cheong, the first Chairperson of the G&S Section, said, "Students felt left out. They wanted a younger group to work closely with the IEM Council and to find out more about training programmes and how to become a professional engineer."

Representatives from the Engineering Society of UM met with the IEM Council members to discuss the matter seriously. Consequently, a meeting was called for on 28 March 1970. A total of 11 graduates and students met with two IEM Council members. The meeting resulted in the formation of a Protem Committee to initiate a G&S Section. The section was later approved by the IEM Council on 11 May 1970. A recruitment drive was then initiated in UM. The "By-laws and Regulations" were drafted by the Council in close co-operation with the Protem Committee. Ir. Chiam Teong Tee (a IEM Council Member and lecturer in UM back then) was instrumental in helping to draft the By-laws of the section. The By-laws and Regulations were modelled after similar sections in the United Kingdom and Australia.

The inaugural meeting of the G&S Section was held on 28 June 1970 at the Lecture Theatre of the Engineering Faculty, UM. A total of 53 Graduate and Student Members attended and a formal resolution to form a G&S Section was passed unanimously. After some discussion, the By-laws and Regulations of the section was accepted unanimously as well. A total of 10 founding Committee Members were elected at the meeting, who later in the day held a discussion to elect the office bearers. As a result, Ir. Cheah Kok Cheong was elected as the first Chairperson and Ir. Gurmit Singh as the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer of G&S at that time.

IN 1970s

In the early 1970s, G&S members were fortunate to be granted permission to use the premises of the Engineering Faculty of UM for their regular activities from the late Tan Sri Datuk Ir. Professor Chin Fung Kee (founder of the Engineering Faculty). This was allowed before the passing of the University and Colleges Act. Later on, most meetings for the G&S Section were held at the LLN office in Jalan Timor, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Ir. Cheah recalled, "In those days, being a committee member meant having to do a lot of work. There was no Secretariat back then." At that time, graduates from UM dominated the G&S Section. The first three Chairpersons were ironically former office bearers of the Engineering Society of UM.

As a new organisation, the founding committee worked very hard to establish closer rapport with the main IEM main body and Council. The committee also strived to layout proper plans in order to be recognised as an effective unit. The challenge back then was to attract more G&S members so that the section could be sustained. Nevertheless, the committees were successful in consolidating the foundation of the section. They were also successful in raising awareness among the graduates and students the importance of membership in the IEM and Professional Interview requirements.

During the mid-1970s, issues of unemployed engineers started to crop up. Ir. Hoo Hok Kim said, "There were no mega projects back then." Ir. Gurmit Singh noted, "Salaries in the government sector was a problem. Some engineers were paid as low as RM700 per month, even lower than that of other civil servants." The G&S Section organised various career guidance talks for engineering graduates and undergraduates. The move resulted in engineering graduates being more prepared to develop their career in the engineering profession. Another major issue during that time was the Engineers Act. Ir. Hoo recalled, "It was a licensing issue. Professional Engineers were not allowed to sign."

From 29 April to 8 May 1977, the first overseas study tour to Thailand was organised by the G&S Section. Seven young engineers visited the Engineering Institute of Thailand (EIT), Department of Highway, Bangkok Metropolitan Water Works Authority and the Asian

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IEM GRADUATE AND STUDENTS – YOUNG ENGINEERS SECTION PAST CHAIRMEN

1970/71 <i>Ir. Cheah Kok Cheong</i>	1982/83 <i>Ir. Cheng Kim Hua</i>	1997/98 <i>Ir. Lee Chong Nam</i>
1971/72 <i>Ir. Gurmit Singh</i>	1983/84 <i>Ir. Ter Leong Kee</i>	1998/2000 <i>Sdri. Foong Pek Ling</i>
1972/73 <i>Ir. Hoo Hok Kim</i>	1984/85 <i>Ir. Kong Peng Sun</i>	2000/2002 <i>Engr. Kok Hee Poh</i>
1973/74 <i>Ir. Mohd. Ghazali bin Hj Hamzah</i>	1985/87 <i>Ir. Lim Choon Hai, Chris</i>	2002/2004 <i>Engr. Tan Pey Bin, Clement</i>
1974/76 <i>Y. Bhg. Dato' Ir Zaghlol bin Hj Hanafiah</i>	1987/89 <i>Ir. K Gunasegaran</i>	2004/2006 <i>Engr. Suresh Yegambaram</i>
1976/78 <i>Ir. Lee Kwee Lu (deceased)</i>	1989/90 <i>Ir. Yip Hing Wai</i>	2006/2008 <i>Ir. Yau Chau Fong</i>
1978/79 <i>Y. Bhg. Dato Paduka Ir. Prof. (Dr) Hj. Keizrul Abdullah</i>	1990/92 <i>Y. Bhg. Datuk Ir. Rosaline Ganendra</i>	2008/2010 <i>Engr. Ngeow Yen Wan, Roland</i>
1979/80 <i>Ir. Wang Hong Kok</i>	1992/94 <i>Ir. Wong Chuen Fun, Richard</i>	2010/2011 <i>Engr. Shuhairy Norhisham</i>
1980/81 <i>Ir. Ng Wu Sin, Steven</i>	1994/95 <i>Ir. Poobalan Mahalingam</i>	
1981/82 <i>Ir. Lim Choo Hock</i>	1995/97 <i>Sdr. Raghib Fasih Azmi</i>	

Institute of Technology. Starting from the late 1970s, there were active participation in the G&S by engineers from the Drainage and Irrigation Department. Y. Bhg. Dato' Paduka Ir. Prof (Dr) Hj. Keizrul bin Abdullah, the former Director General of DID, was the G&S Chairperson in the late 1970s. He said, "The G&S Section was being ignored back then."

After having been established for almost a decade, the G&S Section attempted to gain better recognition from the IEM Council and the public. The G&S Section also began organising courses on soft skills, including public speaking and project management.

IN 1980s

Active participation in the G&S Section from engineers working in the DID and JKR continued into the early 1980s. The biggest achievement perhaps was the first G&S Gala Dinner held at Merlin Hotel (now known as the Concorde Hotel); where a total of 52 tables were sold. This was a big "contrast" to the G&S Dinner of the previous year, which was held at a KFC outlet.

Poor participation in the G&S Section was a major concern to the committee back then. The biggest issue at that time revolved around contract engineers. Ir. Lim Choo Hock said, "Engineering graduates had to serve the government for two years back then, after which they had to apply for an extension. Graduate engineers were sometimes asked to leave even though they would very much like to continue." The G&S Section, together with some of the contract engineers, mounted a strong protest against the government's proposal to withdraw the accelerated pay scale of contract engineers. The protest succeeded in achieving its objective. The effort allowed the G&S Section to gain foothold in terms of recognition.

On a more leisurely note, a badminton tournament was organised for the members to fight for the Chiam (IEM President) and Lim (G&S Chairperson) Challenge Trophies. The Chairperson for the 1982/83 session, Ir. Cheng Kim Hua, spoke out against the Malaysian Society of Agricultural Engineers in the Malay Mail (12 January 1983).

He said, "T" was reprimanded by the Council for making a press statement about the formation. I waited for a response, but there was none. So I had to come out with a statement because I believed a splintered body would only hinder the growth of IEM. It dilutes the time and effort spent by the engineers in many engineering societies..."

Besides this, other significant contributions included the introduction of the first edition of the G&S Book on "Engineering Professionalism and Ethics" (EP&E) and the running of night classes for IEM/BEM Examination on Part I and Part II papers. On the financial side, the team managed to lobby for an increased in allocation, which lasted up to today. In 1985, the G&S Section became very much involved in community service, evidenced by the construction of a bus stop at Jalan Changgai, Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

In 1986, graduate engineers were not allowed to use the title "Ir". Under the proposed amendment to the Registration of Engineers Act 1967, no person other than a registered professional engineer shall be entitled to use the title before his/her name or the abbreviation of "P. Eng.". Prior to the amendment, the IEM Constitution under Section 2.5 allowed Fellow, Corporate and Graduate Members of IEM to use the title.

The recession in the 1980s posed a major concern. Employment and job opportunities were very limited. Engineering undergraduates were uncertain about their future in the engineering profession. The G&S Section continued to make strong calls for minimum wages, and for it to be compulsory for engineering graduates to serve a two-year contract with the government agencies. Again, the G&S Section received good participation from engineers in the civil service, particularly from the DID. During this time, the G&S Section began organising more activities, such as regular sports sessions, computer courses, talks and seminars, site visits and disco nights. The G&S Section also held discussions with unemployed graduates to look into ways to help them. Ir. Yip Hing Wai said, "Employment back then was so bad that there were cases of engineering graduates having to work as fried kuey teow helpers at night market (pasar malam)..."

The late 1980s marked the starting point for the G&S Section to fight for representation in the IEM Council. The foresight made the committee worked hard to start the Electronic Board Bulletin project even though the Internet was not yet widely utilised in Malaysia. The G&S Section also improved relations with student members; the chairpersons were always invited as the guest-of-honour to the dinners hosted by the Engineering Society of UM.

IN 1990s

Y. Bhg. Dato' Ir. Rosaline Ganendra became the 20th Chairperson of the G&S Section in 1990, and the first female engineer in IEM elected to the chair. Her election was seen

as a strong statement that members recognised the growing role of women engineers in the engineering profession, and encouraged their participation in the Institution. With a lady engineer at the helm, the committee started to reach out to students in local universities. They also started participating in the Conference for the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations (CAFEO) in Manila. The formation of the Young Engineers for the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (YEAFFEO) was spearheaded by the IEM G&S Section and held its first meeting in Brunei on 28 November 1994. It was chaired by Ir. Poobalan Mahalingam (the G&S Chairman then), and the Young Engineers Exchange Programme and Outstanding (National) Young Engineers Award were suggested, among others, at the time.

In 1991, Y. Bhg. Dato' Ir. Prof. Dr Chuah Hean Teik, a lecturer in the Department of Electrical Engineering of UM, (now with UTAR) took the spotlight as the first recipient of the IEM Young Engineer Award. In 1993, the G&S Section demonstrated its caring nature to society by donating RM4,000 to the SHELTER - a home for battered children. The section turned "green" in the mid-1990s; as the theme for the 1995 G&S Annual Dinner was "Environmental Green". The committee had organised many activities including treasure hunts on wheels, visits to old folks homes and regular sports sessions. Another major achievement was the strong relationship among the universities, namely, UM, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).

The G&S Section also organised career guidance talks in view of the "shortening" of engineering degree courses from four years to three years. The mid-1990s also saw the first G&S representative in the IEM Council. Meanwhile, the G&S Section also received recognition internationally as the committee was invited to the Philippines to help setting the Young Engineers of the Philippines (YEP). Towards the end of the 1990s, one notable accomplishment was the introduction of the G&S Retreat, which was to address and discuss the continuity issue, and decide the focus and objectives of the section.

IN 2000s

Sdri. Foong Pek Ling led the section into the new millennium with a clear vision and mission. A G&S website was set-up to allow and facilitate the easy exchange and sharing of information. In addition, a new edition of the EP&E Book was published. The current G&S Committee brought the section to even greater heights. Out of more than 20 activities that were organised in 2001, the "5 Meets" were the most significant. The committee held its first meeting with the G&S Section from the various of IEM branches, and student representatives of engineering societies from various universities within the Klang Valley. The committee also organised a dinner meeting with IEM Past Presidents

and Excomm. members. The meetings with other professional bodies were held on 2 February 2002.

Graduate Training has been the main focus since 2000. A survey aimed at collecting the members' opinion on the compulsory courses required under the new requirements (since 1 January 1998) was conducted in 2001. Lifelong learning or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is believed to be the key to success. Various courses, workshops and talks have been organised. Apart from the Graduate Training, the Student Liaison was also not neglected. In fact, the committee managed to gather all engineering student societies within the Klang Valley to work together. One of the major intervarsity projects was the Engineering Games 2002 jointly organised by three universities, namely, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) and Multimedia University (MMU), Cyberjaya in October 2002.

In addition, the Publications and IT portfolios have contributed significantly in keeping the members informed and updated on the G&S development. The G&S Welfare Committee also conducted social activities for the benefit of young members. The Incoming Chairperson for session of 2002/2004, Sdr. Clement Tan Pey Bin, foresaw that the Graduate Training will continue to be of the important elements of the section's objectives. In 2004/2006, with Engr. Suresh Yegambaram as the chairperson, the IEM-YES was more involved in community services projects to give back to society. During this session, the section received strong support in the form of volunteers from the graduates and students.

Moving on to session 2006/2008, with Ir. Yau Chau Fong as the Chairperson, the Graduate and Students Section was rebranded as the Graduate and Students – Young Engineers Section or YES. This session gathered all IEM-YES leaders from all over Malaysia at its first national summit in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Engr. Roland Ngeow Yen Wan was the chairperson for the 2008/2010 session. This session successfully organised the IEM-YES Charity Dinner 2008 where total of 60 tables were sold. The charity project focus was Pondok Penyayang Raudah, Gombak, where the young engineers managed to channel natural water resources to the orphanage house. Engr. Ngeow also managed to build a stronger relationship between young professionals with many activities between young professional alliances.

IN 2010s

In June 2010, the IEM-YES celebrated its 40th anniversary of establishment. The chairmanship was passed on to Engr. Shuhairy Norhisham. With the introduction of graduate affairs into its portfolio, a stronger focus on graduates will be needed. The continuous roles of the IEM-YES in IEM activities such as IEM Engineering Week, IEM Family Day and others, enabled this section to become more involved in helping the IEM main committee. IEM-YES also created history in 2011 when 43 ASEAN young engineers were registered as Associate ASEAN Engineers. ■



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 Fax : 033 - 6362 8882
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International
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