

AIChE Chicago History – College Interaction and Relationship

Janet Werner

The AIChE Chicago Section has long had initiatives to encourage and foster the study of chemical engineering at the local universities -- first Northwestern University and IIT (originally called Armour Institute) and then UIC (originally called University of Illinois Circle Campus) when the university began graduating chemical engineering students in the early 1970s.

The earliest records of interaction with the local student chapters are joint meetings between the Chicago Section and the Student Chapter at Armour Institute of Technology (now IIT). The very first of joint meeting with a student chapter occurred in our very first year as a chapter. In November 1925, when students were invited to a local section meeting. At the close of this meeting, Chair F. L. Dunlap expressed a hope that this meeting would set a precedent for such meetings in the future. Joint meetings with the Armour Institute Student Chapter meetings occurred regularly from 1935 to 1940 and 1949 to 1951. These meetings, sometimes referred to as Joint with the Student Chapters, featured programming and speakers from the student chapter. They may have featured tours or labs or students presenting their research. Interestingly, the October 1991 meeting held at IIT had a similar format.

Chicago Section NEWS



October 1991

Number 2

OCTOBER MEETING: UNIVERSITY NIGHT
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Meeting Sponsor: CHICAGO CHEM CONSULTANTS CORP.

Our second meeting of the year will be held at the IIT Chicago Campus. It will be, in essence, a joint meeting with the Student Chapter and will include the following:
Early birds (4:30pm) will be treated to a tour of the IIT ChE department as well as presentations on professional registration. Interested students from all of the Chicago area universities and section members are invited to join with registered P.E.'s in a question

Meeting Notice

Date: WEDNESDAY, October 9, 1991

Location: Illinois Institute of Technology
Herman Hall Student Union Building
Chicago, IL 60616

Time: 4:30 IIT Tour and P. E. Q & A Session
5:30 Social Hour
6:30 pm Dinner

Meeting Agenda: Presentation of AIChE Fellow Award to Prof. Gidaspow
Presentation of Student Chapter Activities Forum on Student/Industrial Interactions
Pre-Meeting Forum on Professional Registration
Pre-Meeting Tour of IIT ChE Department

Price: \$ 17.50 Members, \$ 20 Non-members
(includes dinner & tour)
ChE Students FREE
(Obtain free passes from faculty advisor).

Please make reservations by Friday, October 4, by calling the ACS office at (708) 647-8405. If you discover that you cannot attend the meeting after making a reservation, please find someone else to take your place.

Menu: Pizza, Refreshments & Dessert

There are no specific records of student chapter interaction in the 1940s. Some explanation of this is because students were drafted for World War II. In September 1944, the officer board discussed having better relations with student chapters but the board decided to postpone this until "there are sufficient civilian students to permit properly organized student chapters."

In the 1950, the AIChE Chicago Section started writing actual newsletters rather than just a letter or bulletin with information on the next monthly meeting. The newsletters for 1950-1951 included student chapter news. In January 1954, the AIChE Chicago Section began inviting two seniors each from Northwestern and IIT to attend each monthly meeting for free as a guest of the section. By the 1970s, chemical engineering students from the new University of Illinois Chicago Circle (now UIC) were also invited to monthly meetings.


The policy of inviting students from the local university chemical engineering programs for free generally continued throughout the years but varied due to financial constraints. Some years there were unlimited numbers of students allowed to attend; other years there were a limited number of students invited through student chapter advisors. The general policy of free student registration for local section meetings continued until the 2004-2005 year when financial necessity required the section to instead offer students a discounted registration fee for the meetings. This is still in effect today. The heavily discounted registration fee is intended to ensure that students will show up to the meeting, limiting section financial losses if students with free registration do not attend.

Starting in 1961, there was a Foreign Student Program that sought to welcome international students (both undergraduate and graduate) and encourage them to continue pursuit of chemical engineering as a career in the United States. This program evolved into a Foreign Student Night in 1963-1965, which then dissolved into encouraging all students to attend local section monthly meetings.


In the 1980s and early 1990s, there were occasional university student night meetings, but they were not planned as regular annual event. In more recent history, we have been hosting an annual student meeting night where we host a meeting at one of the three local universities. We typically host this meeting in April and feature a poster competition or poster session for both undergraduate and graduate students. Hosting the meeting in April allows senior design students to present their work and practice before their final presentations. In 2023, this student night meeting and poster competition was combined with the poster competition and dinner meeting of the AIChE Midwest Regional Conference. The first record I could find of a student night meeting featuring a poster session/competition is from April 1995 at Northwestern University. Roger Masson (Student Relations Chair, 1994-1995) helped in organizing this meeting in conjunction with the Northwestern faculty, including Linda Broadbelt, and AIChE students. This meeting, which also included tours of the Northwestern campus and chemical engineering facilities, was undoubtedly a success with a total attendance of 118 people, including 41 students. It is no wonder that this meeting started a tradition! Although there are no continuous records during from 1995 until today, the tradition of

an April student night meeting and poster session/competition at a local university has continued annually up to today (with exception to 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19) per our local section leaders' recollections.

The April 2025 meeting is held in conjunction with the 17th Annual AIChE Midwest Regional Conference (MRC) and will feature the annual student poster competition as well as the presentation of the McCormack awards. I hope that understanding the history of AIChE Chicago's outreach to the chemical engineering university student committee gives you inspiration to attend the April 2025 meeting (or better yet, volunteer as a poster competition judge!) to take part in our Centennial history.



Chicago Section Columns



Chicago Chapter - American Institute of Chemical Engineers April 1995

April Meeting Notice:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When: Wednesday, April 12, 1995
Located at: Northwestern University
 Norris Center
 1999 S. Campus Drive
 Evanston, IL 60208

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 pm Cash Bar/
 Job Posting & Campus Tour
 5:30 - 8:30 pm Graduate and Undergraduate Research

Poster Session
 6:30 - 7:30 pm Dinner
 7:30 - 7:50 pm Awards Night
 7:50 - 9 pm Speaker "Sustainable Development"

Price: \$23 members
 \$25 nonmembers
 Free for the First 25 Student AIChE Members to Register

Menu: Gyros Bar
 Lemon Chicken
 Roasted Potatoes
 Greek Salad with Feta Cheese
 Tomatoes and Pepperoncini
 Fresh Fruit
 Baklava
 Coffee, Hot Tea, and Iced Tea

Please make reservations by Friday, April 7, by calling the ACS office at (708) 647-8405. When making a reservation, please specify whether or not you will be attending the campus tour. If you discover you cannot attend the meeting after making a reservation, please find someone else to take your place.

Directions: See map and directions on page 8.

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POSTER SESSION AT NU

On April 12th, Northwestern University graduates and undergraduates from the Chemical Engineering Department will be presenting research posters at the NU Norris Center. In this poster session sponsored by AIChE, a couple of students from each chemical engineering group will highlight the various research endeavors being conducted at Northwestern University. These knowledgeable representatives will be present at 5:30pm to elaborate further and to field questions. This special Northwestern University poster session will give you a snapshot of current and cutting edge research.

American Institute of Chemical Engineers April 1995 1

From April 1995 Newsletter

In the 2013-2014 programming year, the AIChE Chicago Section began a scholarship program for high school seniors and undergraduate students. Originally intended for children of active local section members, this scholarship was quickly changed to be opened to active local student chapter members. Unfortunately,

finances for the section have caused us to stop this scholarship program starting this 2024-2025 programming year.

Since 2005, the AIChE Chicago Symposium, which is now the AIChE Midwest Regional Conference, has been hosted at either UIC or IIT. The undergraduate students, especially the student chapter leaders, have often been involved in planning, and each year the conference relies heavily on undergraduate student volunteers to run. Student volunteers helped at the registration desk, served as runners for session rooms, and acted as guides for the High School Outreach program. Undergraduate student involvement is integral to the Midwest Regional Conference.

The longest continuously running AIChE Chicago program to foster chemical engineering study has been the McCormack award. Each year, the McCormack award is given to one chemical engineering undergraduate student at Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Illinois Institute of Technology based on a combination of excellence in study, research, and extra-curricular activities. This award was first given in fall 1955 and has continued being given annually since then. Besides being a charter member of the AIChE Chicago Section, Harry McCormack was one of the first people in 1899, to put the words "chemical" and "engineer" together to designate a new, developing profession. McCormack came to IIT in 1904 and served as the first Chemical Engineering Department Chair in 1908. He held that position until 1946 for a total of 38 years as department chair. Besides being an educator, Harry McCormack was an active consultant, researcher, designer, author, and editor, and he was active in the Chicago Sections of both AIChE and ACS. In 1949, the AIChE Chicago officer board voted to appoint Harry McCormack a lifetime honorary board member in recognition of his service to the section. When Harry McCormack died in 1953 at the age of 76, he was still active in the AIChE Chicago Section, attending board meetings and even volunteering to be a speaker as an informal "speakers bureau" for other local sections. With this history of service to the section and the chemical engineering profession, it is no wonder that the section chooses to honor his memory with an award for excellency in undergraduate student studies and service.

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