Introducing the 2013-2014 Executive Board!

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Greetings from Northwestern ASCE! This quarter our steel bridge and concrete canoe teams finished their projects and competed in the 2014 ASCE Great Lakes Regional Conference. We displayed the bridge and canoe to the community at our annual open house. We also hosted groups of students for take your daughters and sons to work day, teaching them about concrete and helping them make their own concrete figurines to take home. We started a tradition of Lunchtime Talks with professors from the department, where the students and faculty can take part in discussions over lunch. Additionally, both students and faculty attended an architecture boat tour along the Chicago River. As the school year comes to a close, we are planning even more fun and educational events for next year to engage more students and faculty in the department. Have a great summer everyone!

- Brett Horin, Class of 2015

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Northwestern University’s team of 16 students competed in the AISC Steel Bridge Competition at the Great Lakes Regional Conference earlier this quarter. The challenge this year was to build a 1:10 scale model bridge spanning a distance of 17 feet.

The team spent fall quarter designing the bridge and preparing for its fabrication. Students took part in learning the structural analysis software SAP2000 to design the bridge and brainstormed ideas for connection design. In preparation for fabrication, the team members learned to operate various shop machinery through the fabrication of mock connections.

The bridge design was finalized early winter quarter and fabrication immediately commenced. The bridge was completed in the first weeks of spring quarter.

At the Regional Conference, which took place on April 12, 2014, the team constructed the bridge in 24 minutes. The bridge weighed 190 pounds and passed a lateral load test, but could not continue vertical loading due to safety concerns.

The NU Steel Bridge team would like to thank the Associated Steel Erectors, American Institute of Steel Construction, Nakman Steel, ASCE Illinois Section, and the Northwestern Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering for their generous support. The team also thanks Professor Karen Chou for design consultation, and Scott Simpson and Bob Taglia for fabrication advice.

This year has been a fun learning experience and the team hopes to continue to improve next year!

Next year’s Steel Bridge team will be led by seniors Sara Ibarra, Clare Terpstra, and Karen Wang.
In May, a group of students and faculty made a trip to the Chicago Architecture Foundation’s Architectural Boat Tour in downtown Chicago. During the tour, a docent from the CAF gave a brief history of many of the city’s most notable building, including both structural and architectural components to the building designs. This event gave ASCE students an opportunity to talk to faculty members in a less formal setting while enjoying a wonderful day on the boat.

In April, Northwestern’s ASCE chapter was invited to participate in an Employer Forum that took place in the Ford Motor Company Engineering Design Center. Various student groups on campus were given the chance to meet representatives from different companies in the Chicago area. Each student group introduced themselves and talked about the projects that they’re involved in. Following, the students were able to spend time talking to the employers and asking them questions about their businesses. It was a great place to network and learn about future job or volunteer opportunities.