



ASCE Geo-Institute

Best Practices for Chapters Guidelines

July 2025

The following suggested guidelines are intended to provide ideas for the Chapters which will help them prioritize activities found beneficial by other Geo-Institute Chapters. Details for Chapter start-up activities and holding successful meetings have been provided as attachments. Successful Geo-Institute Chapters consider the following:

- Communicate effectively with local Geo-practitioners and interact with ASCE Sections and Branches, G-I Graduate Student Organizations and other affiliated organizations: This communication and interaction should include regular emails, current and up-to-date web sites, newsletters, and/or tweets. Many Chapters include in their local membership engineers, contractors, suppliers and other non-geotechnical professionals who play an important role in the success of our profession and project pursuits. This communication should also include the Geo-Institute Organizational Members in the area (<https://www.geoinstitute.org/about-us/membership/organizational-membership/organizational-member-listing>).
- Develop a core of supporting firms to provide effective encouragement and resources:
 - This includes reaching out to managing principals in local offices to develop the necessary base.
- Reach out to other engineers and contractors (outside the geotechnical field) to develop a broader base:
 - This could include bringing others outside the geo-profession into dinner meetings and seminars where the content provides a beneficial link.

- Hold well-attended regular meetings:
Monthly evening or lunch hour meetings can be arranged at a variety of venues. This could include dinner and drinks, rotating lunch hour “brown bag” meetings at the offices of the Geo-Institute Chapter members or Organization Member offices or holding web-based meetings (e.g., Zoom, Teams).
- Encourage student attendance at meetings by subsidizing meals:
This can be accomplished by approaching local firms and Organizational Member firms active with the Geo-Institute to provide financial support. This is a very small concession if spread among a number of firms.
- Provide geotechnical student night meetings to discuss ongoing study and research:
This would involve reaching out to local universities and colleges, as well as soliciting interest from local firms with interns and staff pursuing geotechnical degrees outside the area.
- Develop a standardized PDH form:
PDHs should be available for technical meetings (monthly dinner or lunch presentations) as well as other seminar or short courses organized by the Chapters (note some states have strict PDH’s policies, check with your local board if you are unsure of your states requirements).
- Provide quality presentations on current technical subjects and relevant ethics:

This can be supported by the Cross USA Lecture Tour, and the LIC interest in elevating the need to provide “affordable” video streaming of keynote speakers from a variety of ASCE professional events (annual Geo-Congresses would be of particular interest to many practitioners).

The above items often create the core activities of many of our Chapters. In addition to these activities, the following pursuits could be developed to enhance your Chapter’s presence in the community and further your members professional development:

- Provide scholarships to geotechnical students.
- Provide funding for the GeoChallenge competition held at the annual Geo Congress. (The GeoChallenge is a set of student competitions sponsored by the Geo-Institute to challenge

and encourage undergraduate and graduate civil engineering students interested in geotechnical engineering”).

- Support younger members and develop special programs focused on their needs.
- Lead or participate in active K-12 outreach programs.
- Host or participate in regional geotechnical seminars, coordinating with other Chapters.
- Sponsor public service/awareness activities.
- Champion sustainability principles and awareness.
- Setting and achieving healthy membership goals.
- Encourage member firms to pursue one of many ASCE Geo-Institute awards available annually
- Highlight local Diplomates (BC.GE.) and encourage members to apply to the Academy of Geo-Professionals for Diplomat Status.

Things the LIC can and should consider doing to facilitate the pursuit of these activities by the Chapters:

- Maintain/annually update the Chapter leadership contact information readily available on the GI website
- Develop an on-line annual survey to be completed by any G-I Chapter member but required of the existing Chapter leadership.
- Provide Chapter updates for inclusion in GEOSTRATA.
- Hold National Chapter Summits to facilitate growth in the Chapters, discuss opportunities for Chapter support, interact with other Chapter leaders.

Additional Activities Suggested for the Chapters:

Membership

- The Geo-Institute recommends that chapter leaders maintain membership in good standing.
- While keeping roster for the chapter can be challenging, it is crucial to focus on:
 - Engaging student members and younger members.
 - Recruiting and retaining young members to ensure a sustainable future for the chapters, ASCE Sections, and Branches.

ASCE Geo-Institute Resources

1. Dedicated Staff: The Geo-Institute team is fully supported by ASCE resources, including legal services, accounting services, and geographic services.
2. ASCE Programs: The organization offers various programs in areas such as Government Relations, Communications, Public Policy, Honors and Awards, Diversity, History and Heritage, as well as Educational, Technical, Professional, and Global Activities.
3. Membership Database: Chapters can request membership for the Institute, which includes options such as ASCE-Institute membership (for ASCE members who select one or more Institutes), Institute Only, Corporate/Company membership, and other membership categories.

Attachment A

New Chapter Development Activities

The first task in creating a G-I Chapter is to prepare a Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the G-I, the proposed G-I Chapter and the local Section/Branch of the ASCE. The form is available on the G-I website (<https://www.geoinstitute.org/index.php/chapters>). Once the necessary signatures are obtained, submit the completed form to your LIC representative to be approved by the G-I Board of Governors. Once approved the following start up tasks will be necessary in order of priority.

Core Operating Tasks:

- Develop Bylaws (example bylaws are available: <https://www.geoinstitute.org/index.php/chapters>).
- Organize the Chapter leadership consistent with the By-Laws.
- Submit Form W-9 to the IRS to receive a tax ID number. Contact your Section for 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit corporation information.
- Set up a Bank Account and Payment Account (e.g., PayPal, Zelle, Venmo).
- Connect with the G-I Local Involvement Committee (LIC) Region representative. (contact Krystina Scott kscott@asce.org) for G-I benefits and support your Chapter may need.
- Obtain existing G-I membership database from G-I (contact Krystina Scott) for your Section.
- Identify local universities featuring geotechnical programs.
- Develop the annual schedule and meeting location.
- G-I will generate a logo of the chapter.

Additional Tasks:

- Set up an account on ASCE Collaborate to store Chapter documents and email your members.
- Identify local universities featuring geotechnical programs
- Create website, LinkedIn, and/or social media presence for meeting announcements and news.
- Develop newsletter format and routine
- Encourage G-I Chapter leadership to attend the G-I National Chapter Summit
- Participate in Chapter Achievement awards program.
- Host a G-I Cross Country Lecturer.
- Advertise G-I Chapter activities in GEOSTRATA
- Collaborate with relevant organizations to enhance the geoprofession value.

Attachment B

Organizing and Holding Successful Events

Ideas and insights from Chapter representatives for successful events were discussed during the past Summits. Typically, the Chapter will form a small committee to steer the planning activities and interact with the Chapter's general membership. The factors felt most important in influence on the success of Chapter events included the following:

1. Define your purpose. Will the event be a monthly dinner meeting or lunch? Are you developing a technical seminar or short course? Full day or something shorter? Will it be presented during the week or on a weekend? What time of year, locale, etc. are you focusing on? Will the event make money or at least break even? Please uphold the highest standards of excellence in civil engineering education.
2. Define your topic. This will include consideration of past topics if this event is an ongoing activity (keeping a list of past dinner/lunch meeting or seminar topics is helpful), or choosing an important topic for Chapter membership. Discuss within the steering committee:
 - a. What is relevant to your membership
 - b. What is relevant to selecting the proper locale of the event?
 - c. Know your audience (Chapter members only, or other geo-professionals)
 - d. Identify a theme that is based around local interest and issues
 - e. Topics should be broad enough to reach across multiple disciplines if you are trying to draw other geo-professionals to the event.
3. Choose your speaker (very important). There are many sources for identifying suitable speakers including your membership knowledge base, Geo-Institute Board members, and previous Geo Congress presenters. But first explore with membership:
 - a. What do people want to hear about? Case histories, research topics or new technology?
 - b. What is relevant to your practice?
 - c. Who is available?
 - d. What are speaker's strengths?
4. Atmosphere must be "fun" and "enjoyable", whether it is a dinner/lunch meeting or seminar/short course.
 - a. Must provide a conducive environment for the exchange of information/ conversation
 - b. The locale is important.

- c. Vendor participation can add special focus to topic of discussion (important for seminars).
- 5. Value. Membership will be interested in and feel compelled to participate in future events if value is shown through:
 - a. Good oration
 - b. Price (remember that not all membership is supported by their employers)
 - c. Location central to many