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What Should We Look for in Candidates for HFES Offices?

By Paul A. Green, Immediate Past President

In a few months, Full Members and Fellows will receive a request for nominations for HFES officers. As I noted in my presidential address at the 53rd Annual Meeting in San Antonio, involvement in all professional and social organizations has declined over time, especially in the United States. This phenomenon is well documented in Robert D. Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2001); however, these societal trends described are modifiable. The next year or so will be particularly challenging as economic pressures force us to concentrate on what we are paid to do. Nonetheless, overemphasis on the short term may lead to long-term professional compromises.

There are a few ways that we can shape our profession. One of them is deciding whom we elect for leaders, the first step of which is nominating them for office. For HFES, the primary leadership is the Executive Council, which consists of six at-large members; the incoming, current, and past secretary-treasurer; and the incoming, current, and past president. Of those twelve people, four new members (two at-large, secretary-treasurer-elect, president-elect) are elected by HFES Full Members each year.

What are the qualities of someone who should be on the Executive Council or, for that matter, in any leadership role in HFES, such as a domain leader who oversees several committees or a committee chair? What follows are my personal thoughts on the desired qualities for candidates for HFES offices, based on experience over the last three decades on HFES committees, on the Executive Council, and as president of HFES.

Have prior experience. People who have (a) served on or led committees, especially at the national level but also at the chapter or local level (and know how HFES functions), and (b) through their activities are in contact with a broad range of members, are well prepared to serve on Council. Such service is also beneficial for committee chairs and domain leaders. For example, the HFES Institute chair (the group of HFES committees that deal with standards) should have prior involvement with ANSI or ISO activities.

There has been some discussion of how much financial acumen the secretary-treasurer should have; some say an MBA is desired and others that there are no special qualifications. The

role of the secretary-treasurer is primarily one of oversight, as Lynn Strother, HFES executive director, handles operations.

For the office of president, it is extremely valuable to have served as an Executive Council member or domain leader, or to have experienced how Council functions. Speaking personally, I had the opportunity to observe six presidents run Council meetings before my term started, and it helped me find a harmonious and productive style that fit the Council. It also gave me a sense of what the major issues were and their history. The most successful presidents pick up where their predecessors left off, make improvements, and create processes and activities that successors and successive Councils want to follow.

Have the time. Being involved in HFES activities does take time, though not always a great deal. Council members need to be able to complete tasks and respond to e-mail or phone calls in a timely manner, not to mention attend two Council meetings each year.

Being president is a particularly significant commitment. My experience was that it took about 20% of my time, and more time immediately before Council meetings. Previous presidents have offered similar estimates. I did not accept the nomination to run for president until after my managers had approved my devoting this much time.

Have the interest. When people are asked to serve on Council, it is a compliment; however, they should have the passion to contribute to the Society. A very good indicator of interest is attendance at prior meetings, especially the Annual Meeting. Showing up year after year and interacting with other members is meaningful. Energy and enthusiasm matter as well.

Have a collaborative work style. Council works best when it develops a consensus, and some of the best members are good listeners. Personality matters.

Be able to broadly represent members. Look for candidate Council members who can represent everyone, not a particular technical group, chapter, or employer. Casting a vote for someone just because he or she shares your background is not necessarily

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conducive to electing leaders who will serve the diversity of members. (This is one of the reasons HFES policies prohibit the use of HFES list servers – for example, for a TG – to ask people to vote for particular candidates.)

About 25% of all HFES members are academic, and about 20% are outside the United States. However, among the current HFES leadership, academic members predominate, and there is no one from outside the United States in any Society-wide leadership role, even committees. We tend to nominate academic members because they publish, which makes them visible. They also tend to volunteer more often for Society roles because those roles more positively contribute to their retention, promotion, and salary than is the case for practitioners. If we want HFES to better represent practitioners and to be global, then those folks need to be on committees and elected to office.

Finding candidates outside the United States is particularly difficult, but members who come to the Annual Meeting when Council meets could be considered as candidates. Most routine HFES activities are done by phone and e-mail. In the future, an increasing percentage of our members will be from outside the United States as HFES becomes more widely perceived as a society run not just by Americans (and therefore, by implication, for Americans).

Thus, we need to realign our leadership to better reflect our membership, but we should do so in a way that does not devalue the important contributions of academic and U.S. members.

Have a strategic vision. This is a characteristic that someone who has not been on Council may not appreciate, and may be a very difficult quality for nominators to assess. In the past, Council has been too tactical, focusing on small problems and, given the engineering mindset, how to solve them. Solving those problems is what committees do. We need leaders to think broadly about the future of human factors/ergonomics and the future of HFES, and to determine where our efforts should be focused in the future. How should HFES disseminate information about science and practice from conferences and standards? Where should we concentrate our efforts to make the world more aware of what HF/E is? What is the most cost-effective manner to attract more good people to our profession? How should HFES personnel and resources be allocated to address the myriad issues we face?

Be known among members. In addition to possessing the previously listed qualities, the candidate must be sufficiently well-known to garner votes.

But what if a person wants to run for office and is not nominated by someone else? The rules allow any Full Member to self-nominate and to ask that others support his or her nomination. Some people tend to be wary of nominating themselves because of concern that others may perceive them as seeking office for reasons other than genuine interest in advancing the Society.

Involvement in Council activities includes financial support for travel and accommodations to attend the required midyear and annual Council meetings. The annual Council meeting occurs on the weekend before the HFES Annual Meeting, and the

three-day midyear meeting is held in the spring. In addition, HFES has recently established a practice of monthly Friday conference calls, in which Council members participate.

So, I would like to encourage you to think hard about who can really make our Society better and nominate them for office – even if it is *yourself*.

If you prefer not to run for office but want to help the Society, there are many options. Volunteer to help with your local chapter's events or publish the newsletter, or help with the chapter Web site. Attend your technical group's business meetings and volunteer to assist with the Annual Meeting proposal reviews or the TG newsletter or Web site. If you do a few things and do them well, on time, and in a manner that encourages others to work with you, there will be more opportunities for you to serve.

ANNUAL MEETING

Submit Your Proposals for HFES 2010



HFES welcomes proposals for the technical program of the [54th Annual Meeting](#), to be held September 27-October 1, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center in San Francisco. Complete details are provided in the [Call for Proposals](#) on the HFES Web site. **Submissions are due on Friday, February 19.**

Please notify your colleagues in allied fields who might be interested in presenting their work that the Annual Meeting is open to all – membership is not required to submit a proposal or attend.

Decision letters will be sent in mid-April. HFES looks forward to receiving your submission.

The following are detailed calls for proposals for workshops and a selection of HFES Technical Groups.

2010 Workshop Proposals Invited

By Michelle L. Rogers, Workshops Chair

Does this description fit you?

- Can prepare and deliver a combination of educational lecture and active, hands-on exercises to promote skill building of a tool, technique, or method.
- Have knowledge that can be shared that covers technical skills such as advanced statistical techniques (e.g., causal modeling), methodologies (e.g., accident investigation techniques, design of dynamic measuring instruments, experimental design), or other professional skills (e.g., how to write procedures based on HF/E guidelines, types of corporate-feasible usability testing, Web style-sheet design).

- Have an interest in sharing knowledge with individuals new to the HF/E profession, people who are experienced in one area of the field but wish to learn new skills in others, or those who wish to enhance their skills in their area of specialization.

If you have any or all of these qualities, consider submitting a proposal for a workshop for the 54th HFES Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Workshops may be 3 or 6 hours long and have one or more presenters, as needed. All workshops will take place on Monday, September 27, 2010. The deadline for submitting proposals for the Annual Meeting is **February 19**. Feel free to contact me at mrogers@drexel.edu. I look forward to receiving your submission.

Education and Training Committee Invites Workshop Proposals

By Nancy J. Stone, Chair, Education and Training Committee

The Education and Training Committee's cosponsorship of two workshops at the 2009 HFES Annual Meeting in San Antonio provided high-quality training opportunities that addressed education and training needs identified by HFES members. The two cosponsored workshops were "Case Studies in Cognitive Systems Engineering" and "Communication Analysis for Assessment Collaboration."

This year's call for workshop proposals focuses on the needed content and skills areas identified in the [2009 Member Education and Training Needs Survey](#). Some of the top content areas identified as needing training and education efforts include human performance modeling, display design and graphical user interface design/signage, human-computer interaction, decision making, cognition, situation awareness, stress/fatigue/sleep, safety, perception and performance, consumer product design, training, individual differences, computer software and Internet applications, and augmented cognition.

Skill areas identified as needing education and training efforts include statistics and data analysis, simulation methods and tools, task analysis/cognitive task analysis, usability analysis/engineering/testing, application of HF/E guidelines and principles, nonquantitative methods, modeling, survey construction, experimental methods, and workload measurement.

Workshop proposals that address these primary education and training needs are highly desired and solicited. Such proposals are subject to the normal technical review process, but presenters of workshops cosponsored by the E&T Committee are paid an additional honorarium.

The deadline for submitting proposals for this year's Annual Meeting in San Francisco is **February 19**. We encourage you to submit your proposal. Be sure to indicate that you wish to have the E&T Committee evaluate it for potential cosponsorship.

Internet Technical Group Seeks Proposals

By Marc Resnick, ITG Program Chair

The Internet Technical Group is looking for exciting proposals for its program at the 54th HFES Annual Meeting. The meeting is in San Francisco this year, so this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase exceptional Internet HF/E work to practitioners who may not usually attend HFES meetings. In particular, we are looking for innovative session proposals – perhaps using alternative formats such as demonstrations, debates, case studies, or panels – that we can use to market the conference to practitioners in the San Francisco Bay area.

Specific topics of interest include health care informatics, mobile UX, Internet-based usability-testing methods, and social networking. But don't limit yourself to these topics – any high-quality proposals will be considered.

If you have any questions, please contact me at resnickm@fu.edu. And don't forget, the deadline for submissions is **February 19**. Details on how to submit your proposal are available on the [Call for Proposals](#) page of the HFES Web site. Only complete and on-time proposals will be considered for review.

Systems Development TG Submissions, Reviewers Invited

By Pam Savage-Knepshield, SDTG Program Chair

The Systems Development Technical Group is interested in hearing from you regarding traditional and novel program ideas or suggestions that you have for our sessions during the 54th Annual Meeting in San Francisco. This includes topic ideas and suggested speakers for invited addresses and symposia, as well as thematic groupings of papers and timely topics in specialized domain areas (e.g., medical, military, education, and consumer products).

The SDTG encourages entries in the demonstration format, which enables presenters to show their innovative designs and interfaces interactively. Also welcomed are submissions that include real-world system development as it relates to (a) differences and similarities across business sectors, (b) advice and lessons learned in making the transition from student to practitioner, (c) requirements elicitation and development, (d) collaboration within multidisciplinary product teams, and (e) the integration of testing during system development. We are also interested in case studies and research findings that are suitable for display as posters.

If you are available to review submissions, please let us know; we could still use a few more people to keep the workload low. If you would like to discuss your ideas, have any questions, or require additional information, please contact me at (732) 427-5130, 1, 3501#, or pam.savageknepshield@us.army.mil.

Macroergonomics TG Welcomes Submissions

By Valerie J. Rice & Petra E. Alfred, METG Program Cochairs

It's time to prepare your submissions for the 54th HFES Annual Meeting in San Francisco! The Macroergonomics Technical Group is seeking proposals for its technical program. Have you done any work improving productivity or quality of work, integrating psychosocial, cultural, and technical factors? Have you improved human performance using a systems approach in any special settings, such as education, medicine, industry, or the military? Submit your proposals showing the work you've done using a macroergonomic approach to improve leadership, communications, corporate culture, management, teamwork, or occupational stress, or surprise us with a totally new application. What worked? What did not?

Sometimes the only way to make lasting change is at the macro-, rather than micro-, level. Share your story on how attention to macroergonomics influences human performance so that others may learn from your work. For additional information, please contact us at valerie.rice@amedd.army.mil or petra.alfred@amedd.army.mil.

SOCIETY HONORS

Awards Nominations Invited

Each year during the HFES Annual Meeting, the Society honors outstanding persons who have made significant contributions to the human factors/ergonomics discipline. Nominations are requested from HFES Full Members for six of these awards. Nominees are not required to be HFES members. Submissions are due on or before **March 30**.

To nominate an award candidate,

- submit the candidate's résumé or curriculum vitae, a nominating letter, and at least two and not more than three letters of support from individuals who know the candidate well enough to assess his or her candidacy in terms of the award's criteria; and
- send all nomination packages to HFES, c/o Lynn Strother, P.O. Box 1369, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1369, or lynn@hfes.org. E-mail submissions are strongly preferred; please submit the package as a single file in PDF format.

Nominations are sought for the following awards:

Distinguished International Colleague Award. This award recognizes a non-U.S. citizen who has made outstanding contributions to the human factors/ergonomics field. Candidates are consid-

ered based on the significance of their contributions and their worldwide recognition within and outside the HF/E profession.

Paul M. Fitts Education Award. This award recognizes a person who has made exceptional contributions to the education and training of HF/E specialists. Candidates should either be currently or previously engaged in college or university teaching of HF/E material or should have written significant textbooks in the field. The principal criteria for evaluation are the influence that the candidate has had on students and/or how extensively the candidate's work has been used by educators in general. If the criterion for the award is student influence, as many as five testimonials from current or previous students may be submitted in addition to the curriculum vitae or résumé and letters of recommendation.

This award is open to all Society members who train or educate and is not restricted to academic educators.

A. R. Lauer Safety Award. This award recognizes a person for outstanding contributions to human factors aspects in the broad area of safety. This includes HF/E work that has led to reduced accidents and injuries in such areas as industry, aviation, surface transportation, and consumer products. Candidates' accomplishments should be related to safety or safety training technology as demonstrated by research or application of HF/E principles. Emphasis should be placed on both programmatic and recent contributions to the field of endeavor.

Alexander C. Williams, Jr., Design Award. This award is intended to recognize those who have made outstanding contributions to the conception or design of any product, service, or system that has had a significant impact on users and exemplifies the excellent use of empirical human factors/ergonomics design principles. "Product, service, or system" may include consumer or business products, training systems, communications systems, computing systems, display systems, control systems, highly procedural systems such as the air traffic system, or any combination of one or more people and equipment designed to perform some goal-oriented function. The product, service, or system need not necessarily be extremely large or complex. The essential criteria are that the product, service, or system has achieved operational status and that its conception and design are based on the outstanding application of experimentally determined HF/E design principles.

In addition to the curriculum vitae or résumé and letters of support, other evidence of the success of the design will be accepted, such as testimonials from users' performance evaluations or papers or reports that substantiate the extent to which the submission is based on experimentally derived HF/E design principles.

Jack A. Kraft Innovator Award. This award honors a person for significant efforts to extend or diversify the application of HF/E principles and methods to new areas of endeavor. In addition, candidates must have made effective efforts to encourage the application of HF/E knowledge and techniques in new areas. The field of endeavor should differ from previous military, space, government, or industry-supported work. Candidates will be evaluated on the significance of their effort to society in general, the adequacy of the effort to accomplish intended objectives (e.g., thoroughness of problem analysis, effectiveness of proposed or achieved solutions), and the impact of their effort on the HF/E profession.

Oliver Keith Hansen Outreach Award. This award recognizes members and nonmembers who engage in significant activities that broaden awareness of the existence of the human factors/ergonomics profession and the benefits it brings to humankind.

Students are encouraged to compete for the **Alphonse Chapanis Student Paper Award** by submitting a proposal for consideration for the 2010 Annual Meeting. The award application form will be available to accepted authors in May.

HFES Fellow Applications Due February 1

The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society's Fellows Selection Committee invites applications for Fellows to be elected in 2010. "Fellow" is a special class of Society membership, as established in the Bylaws, Article I, Section 4. Individuals may apply for Fellow status on their own behalf, or they may submit an application on behalf of another.

The [Fellow Application Package](#) – including instructions, nomination and recommendation forms, and supporting information – may be obtained from the [Fellows page](#) of the HFES Web site (or contact HFES Director of Member Services Carlos de Falla, carlos@hfes.org). The completed application package (application form, recommendation form, candidate's vitae or résumé, and supporting documentation) must be received at the HFES Central Office on or before **February 1, 2010**.

Student Chapters and Members Honored in San Antonio

By Sandra Garrett, Student Affairs Committee Chair

I am pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 HFES Student Member With Honors and Student Chapter With Honors awards. The awards were presented during the Student Reception held at the 54th HFES Annual Meeting in San Antonio.

Student Member With Honors

The following students made outstanding contributions to both the discipline and HFES during their tenure as a student, as evidenced by accomplishments such as presentations at national or international conferences, publication in an approved journal, significant contributions to industry projects, and substantial service to HFES:

Leigh A. Baumgart, University of Virginia; Elizabeth Newlin Canzone, Old Dominion University; Joel M. Cooper, University of Utah; Thomas Ferris, University of Michigan; Joshua A. Gomer, Clemson University; Allyson R. Hall, Texas Tech University; Scarlett R. Herring, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Caroline Joseph, University at Buffalo – State Uni-

versity of New York; David Liu, University of Queensland; Joey Chung Yin So, City University of Hong Kong; Peter N. Squire, George Mason University; and Timothy Robert Turner, Old Dominion University.

Best Student Chapter Awards

Three levels of recognition are based on contributions and achievements in 13 areas, including recruitment, outreach, collaboration, service to HFES, information dissemination, mentorship, and creativity. The following student chapters were honored:

Gold: California State University, Long Beach; George Mason University; Georgia Institute of Technology; Old Dominion University; Texas Tech University; University of Central Florida; University of Idaho; University of Michigan; University of Virginia; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and Wichita State University.

Silver: Clemson University, Purdue University, San Jose State University, Tufts University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Toronto, University of Utah, and University of Queensland.

Congratulations to the 2009 awardees! I encourage you to think about your activities in the coming year and to submit an award application for 2010 honors. The call for applications will be published in the *HFES Bulletin* this spring.

Submit Your Work for the User-Centered Product Design Award

By Dianne L. McMullin & Stanley H. Caplan, Award Chairs

The Product Design Technical Group (PDTG) invites submissions for the 9th Annual User-Centered Product Design Award. This award recognizes outstanding product design and the methods used to specify and achieve the design. Emphasis is placed on innovative and user-centered approaches to human factors/ergonomics and industrial design.

Submissions may address products, software, or systems that are purchased for use in the home, in the workplace, or while mobile. They may include consumer, commercial, and medical products but exclude military equipment or systems. The product or system being nominated must be operational and capable of being marketed with no more than minimal changes. Products already on the market for more than three years will not be considered.

Submit nominations for your own work or that of others. The nominee must be a member of HFES but does not have to be a member of the PDTG. If a team is nominated, at least one person from the team must be an HFES member.

Nominations should be submitted in electronic form. Complete submission requirements (and information about past winners) are available at the PDTG Web site: <http://www.hfes.org/pdtg/>. Sub-

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SOCIETY HONORS, cont.

missions must include descriptions of how the product or process meets the following judging criteria:

- *Functional obviousness:* On first impression, does the design speak to the user in a way that makes the product appealing and apparently easy to use?
- *Ease of operation:* How easy is it to learn and perform tasks in various applicable usage modes (e.g., setup, normal use, failure recovery)?
- *Creativity/innovation:* How is this product unique compared with similar products? How do usability and styling take advantage of product technology?
- *Concept development:* How was new user input created or past user data applied to influence the product or system concept?
- *Design:* How were user data generated or used for specifying design parameters or making design decisions?
- *Evaluation:* What was done to assess the usability of the product design and the need for improvement? This could include iterative assessments made during the design process or feedback obtained in the market that could be used for subsequent versions of the product.

Administration

The deadline for submitting nominations for the award is **May 7**. Nominations should be submitted via e-mail to Dianne L. McMullin at dianne.l.mcmullin@boeing.com.

Judges will declare a winner by early August and may also identify submissions for honorable mention. If none of the submissions is judged to be of sufficiently high quality, no winner will be announced.

The winning product or system will be recognized at the 2010 HFES Annual Meeting in San Francisco, and the awardees will be asked to make a presentation on the product and the development methodology.

For more information or to volunteer to serve on the award selection committee, please contact Stanley H. Caplan at scaplan@usabilityassociates.com.

WORLD USABILITY DAY

Chapters Hold WUD Events

World Usability Day (WUD) was created by the Usability Professionals' Association as a way to highlight the importance of the usability and accessibility of products and services in everyday life. WUD 2009 was held on November 12, and its theme was "Designing for a Sustainable World." Several HFES local and student chapters marked the day with special events, projects, or activities. For more information on WUD, go to <http://www.worldusabilityday.org/>.

Carolina Chapter Marks WUD

The Carolina Chapter cohosted an event with the Triangle Usability Professionals' Association. In keeping with the 2009 WUD theme of sustainability, Amy Hathaway, a water quality

engineer from the City of Raleigh, was invited to speak about the [Fred Fletcher Park Water Garden design project](#). The project is unique in that it addresses the environmental issues of storm-water runoff, water pollution, and erosion in an aesthetically pleasing way, resulting in an enjoyable and educational park experience for visitors.

The event also included a design challenge that was open to chapter members and undergraduate and graduate students in related fields. The challenge was to solve some of today's sustainability design issues. Participants presented their solutions and ideas during the event.

By Christopher B. Mayhorn, Carolina Chapter President

China Chapter-Tsinghua Studies "Ergonomics in the Subway"

To promote the awareness of usability problems and other ergonomics issues in civic life, the China Chapter-Tsinghua collaborated with the Beijing Subway Design Center and launched an activity called "Ergonomics in the Subway." Participants included Beijing Subway employees and students in the Department of Industrial Engineering at Tsinghua University. A total of 44 students in 12 human factors investigation groups went to major stations of the Beijing Subway to do field studies, discovering and analyzing usability and accessibility problems in the design of passenger information systems, ticketing machines, and other aspects of the system. Participants proposed and discussed improvement measures.

All groups first presented their work at the university and then submitted an investigation report (in English) and an ergonomics improvement proposal (in Chinese) to the Beijing Subway Design Center. This event was promoted via the Web sites of the Department of Industrial Engineering and the Institute of Human Factors and Ergonomics at Tsinghua University as a celebration of both World Usability Day and National Ergonomics Month.

By Qin Gao, China Chapter-Tsinghua Secretary

San Diego Chapter Develops Gray-Water Information Kit

In support of the World Usability Day theme of sustainability, the San Diego chapter has produced an information pamphlet highlighting usability issues in the selection, purchase, installation, and maintenance of gray-water harvesting systems. The pamphlet, produced in print and electronic formats, references current information on the laws governing the practice of residential gray-water harvesting in San Diego County. Also included is information on how gray-water collection and reuse can potentially benefit the community.

Installing a residential gray-water system is neither difficult nor expensive. For example, a basic system uses a bucket to capture shower water. The water collected in the bucket is then reused in the garden to water plants. Also, water can be diverted from laundry to lawn or garden. A more sophisticated system requires the installation of a filter in the drain line below a sink and a connection to a toilet. Once the gray water is filtered, it is automatically diverted to the toilet, where it is stored and reused when the toilet is flushed.

The kit is available online at the [chapter's Web site](#) or as a printed brochure by request at Gray-Water Kit, c/o 9180 Brown Deer Road, San Diego, CA 92122, 852/535-1661.

By Joseph Cohen

University of Michigan Student Chapter Finds “Bad Designs on Campus”

Last fall, the University of Michigan Student Chapter hosted its 4th Annual Bad Designs on Campus (BDOC) competition. The BDOC awards ceremony was held on World Usability Day.

Submissions for the competition had to include a description of the selected bad design, the HF/E principles it violates, and a recommendation on how to improve the existing design. Submissions were evaluated based on originality of bad design and proposed solution, applicability to principles of HF/E, severity of the bad design, and practicality of the proposed solution. The top three submissions can be viewed on the [chapter’s Web site](#).

The winning submission highlighted the inadequate directions to the automated external defibrillator (AED) at the G. G. Brown building on campus. G. G. Brown is notoriously difficult to navigate, and the directions to the AED are hard to understand.

As a semester-long project for the current term, this winning submission will be used by the chapter to develop a proposal to be sent to the university in an effort to improve what we have deemed “The Worst Design on Campus.” Our goal was to raise student awareness about HF/E, and we were rewarded with many excellent submissions. With continued member participation, we hope to correct a bad design and make a difference on campus!

By Michael McCloskey, University of Michigan Student Chapter President-Elect

South Jersey Chapter Hosts Design Slam

On November 24, 2009, as part of an annual community outreach effort, I visited Egg Harbor Township High School, where I announced the winners of the South Jersey Chapter’s 3rd Annual World Usability Day design slam contest. The purpose of the contest is to familiarize high school students with the professional field of human factors/ergonomics and to demonstrate the benefits of making products more usable.

For the 2009 contest, teams of students were invited to identify a design problem related to the current year’s World Usability Day theme of sustainability. The students’ task was to develop a design solution to meet the needs of the user and also to explain the benefits and possible drawbacks of the solution from a usability perspective. Students submitted essays, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and 3-D animations that explained their product proposals. Their solutions could be whimsical, but the products had to be designed for both sustainability and usability.

A total of 38 students from three classes submitted 19 contest entries. Some interesting proposals included an e-waste disposal system, a system that uses gym equipment to generate electricity, and cars powered by solar panels.

The first-place entry was a submission by Peter Ata, Ken Hodel, and Brandon Mazzone for a Universal Information Card (UIC). The proposed UIC could be used to replace keys, passports, credit and debit cards, E-Z passes, licenses, and other ID cards. It would reduce the use of plastic, paper, and metal and the number of items people need to carry. The card would be linked to biometric information to prevent theft.

The second-place entry was submitted by Whitney Yang. Her proposal was for a solar/wind-powered household computer control system that uses motion sensors for activating and deactivating lighting, cooling, heating, and security systems. The device would not only deactivate lights and reset the thermostat but also would send alarms, texts, or phone messages when devices are inadvertently left plugged in.

The chapter presented certificates of appreciation to all contest participants and thank-you letters to participating teachers and sponsors. The chapter also awarded \$50 gift cards to the first-place students and a \$25 gift card to the second-place student.

All participants were invited to visit the Federal Aviation Administration’s Research Development and Human Factors Laboratory at Atlantic City International Airport, and winners and honorable mentions were invited to present their work at an upcoming chapter meeting.

The chapter was happy to sponsor this annual event, and we hope to keep expanding it in the coming years. This contest demonstrates to young people in a tangible way how human factors/ergonomics and usability can make life easier.

By Ferne Friedman-Berg

Virginia Tech Screens Film for World Usability Day

The Virginia Tech Student Chapter screened Gary Hustwit’s film *Objectified* to mark World Usability Day. The 2009 WUD theme was “Designing for a Sustainable World,” and as described on the film’s Web site, “*Objectified* is a feature-length documentary about our complex relationship with manufactured objects and, by extension, the people who design them” (<http://www.objectifiedfilm.com/about/>). Professor Rex Hartson, an early pioneer of usability at Virginia Tech, provided a thought-provoking introduction to the film.

The chapter, in collaboration with the Virginia Tech Industrial Designers Society of America Student Chapter, also created a glass-enclosed display for World Usability Day in Virginia Tech’s Graduate Life Center. The display focused on general ergonomics issues, technology usability principles, and other ways in which human factors/ergonomics research has an impact on people in their day-to-day lives. The display was a wonderful opportunity to increase awareness of World Usability Day and human factors/ergonomics among members of the Virginia Tech community.

By Ranjana Mehta, Virginia Tech Student Chapter Past President

PUBLIC POLICY MATTERS

The [Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences](#), of which HFES is a member, provides scientific information about behavioral and brain sciences to policy makers and the public. The Federation also keeps scientists informed about government activities and opportunities related to these sciences, including pending legislation, grant opportunities, and a calendar of events. Sign up to receive the [FABBS e-newsletter](#).

New England Chapter Hosts 6th Student Research Conference

By Angela Garabet, New England Chapter Treasurer

The HFES New England Chapter (NEC) hosted its 6th Annual Student Research Conference on November 13, 2009, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. The conference drew more than 75 human factors/ergonomics professionals, students, and faculty from such universities as MIT, Northeastern, Tufts, the University of Massachusetts at both Amherst and Lowell, and the University of New Hampshire. The conference provided a collegial forum for graduate and undergraduate student presenters to discuss their projects. It featured 16 research presentations by HF/E students; a keynote address, "Human Factors Theories and Applications," by NEC Past President David N. Aurelio; short talks by representatives of our sponsors – Aptima, Inc., and Charles River Analytics – on applications of HF/E research within their companies; an interactive career panel featuring recent HF/E graduates; and catered meals to maximize the time for students and professional attendees to meet and network.

The presentations titled "Assessing the Validity of a Driving Simulation for Comparing In-Vehicle Informational Interfaces" (Ying Wang, MIT) and "Uncovering Barriers to Implementing a Surgical Checklist From a Joint Cognitive Systems Perspective" (Maureen Mulcare, Tufts) were recognized with awards made possible by our sponsors.

Many thanks are due to the volunteers who helped make the conference possible, including the members of the MIT Humans and Automation Lab, David N. Aurelio, and the board of the New England Chapter. The support of our sponsors enabled us to waive the registration fee for student attendees.

Angela Garabet is a research associate at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety.

Workshop Held in Toronto

By Kevin Trinh, University of Toronto Student Chapter President

On November 7, 2009, the University of Toronto Student Chapter organized the 10th Annual Human Factors Inter-University Workshop. This event is rotated among the University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, and University at Buffalo – State University of New York and draws students from other universities in the surrounding area. This year we had more than 70 attendees representing eight universities and industry. Students presented work on topics such as perception, control, cognitive work analysis, and user experience. Application areas were diverse and included health care, transportation, sustainability, video games, and amusement park rides.

Professor Kim Vicente of the University of Toronto provided the morning keynote speech on risk management in health care. Kem Kramer of Research In Motion addressed the World Usability Day theme of "Designing for a Sustainable World" with a

presentation challenging usability practitioners to adapt to changing market needs. Danielle Lottridge from the University of Toronto was voted best speaker for her work on measuring emotions as part of the user experience, and Antony Hilliard of the University of Toronto won the best poster award for his work on Human Factors in energy management. Congratulations to both!

We look forward to another rewarding Inter-University Workshop in the Fall of 2010.

Kevin Trinh is a masters' student in the Department of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering at the University of Toronto.

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