8.11 Industry Meetings

8.11.1 Motivation

One of an SLC's primary missions is to provide student perspectives and to facilitate communication between students, center staff, industry partners, and the NSF. Student contributions and input regarding industry meetings are valuable to the center and to industry. Another function of the SLC is to plan social and professional events that provide students with opportunities to network with center alumni and visitors from industry and academia. Meetings with industrial partners are an ideal opportunity to fulfill these objectives. Students can find potential future employers and also broaden their educational experience through practical applications of their research via internships and other collaborations with industrial partners.

8.11.2 Current Practices Within Active ERCs

Industry/Working Meetings

Center-wide industry meetings are typically held between one and four times per year. Other industry meetings at a project level can occur much more frequently at some centers. As with site visits, students are generally expected to participate in a poster session and other presentations and demonstrations during industry meetings. However, most of the preparation work is conducted through center administrators and faculty advisors on a more individual basis. Industry meetings seem to be an area where SLC and center students are less involved or less successful in their involvement, despite the fact that student involvement with industry relates directly to several of the stated SLC missions and functions as well as to those of the ERC. This is an area where students, working with faculty and center administration, could begin to have greater input over time.

Industry Committee

One center's SLC has an Industry Committee that focuses on activities and events related to industry. For instance, they organize seminars where industry members teach current industry practice to the students on a regular basis and compile lists of current journal publications from the center to distribute to industry.

Industry Seminars

Some SLCs host student-oriented industry seminars, in which companies come and present on the company itself or on their industry in general. Another popular activity is to host workshops in which industry or ERC representatives teach a useful skill to the students. The primary challenge identified with industry seminars is maintaining sufficient student attendence to keep the interest of industry speakers; this is a responsibility of the SLC's leaders. Other possibilities for student-led industry interactions include:

1. Informal Luncheons at conferences attended by students of the ERC and industry members partnered with the ERC Industry
2. Career Panels, where a panel of 3 or more industry members answer questions from students in the ERC relating to internships, future career paths, and general advice for transitioning from a graduate school environment to industry.
3. Mock Interview Sessions where industry representatives and/or faculty hold in-person or via video (Skype, Gchat, Vidyo, etc.) interviews for a fabricated job position with students. These can be one-on-one or multiple-on-one (multiple interviewer-to- one interviewee) interview sessions

Foundry Programs

Entrepreneurial students at some ERCs are taking part in ERC Foundry-type programs, which give such students training and support at the earliest stages of company formation. Examples of Foundries can be found here:

http://erc-assoc.org/achievements/qolt-booth-hit-consumer-electronics-show

http://erc-assoc.org/achievements/erc%E2%80%99s-world-innovation-and-technology-led-entrepreneurship-continues-evolve

Typically, an SLC's role is to maintain contact with an ERC's foundry program and to promote opportunities to students.

Resume book

Finally, some ERCs currently collect resumes of students seeking jobs and internships and compile them into a physical and digital book for distribution to IAB members.

8.11.3 Best Practices and Conclusions

Again, one main function of an SLC is to represent the student body to center administrators and guests--especially industry sponsors. Industry meetings provide an excellent opportunity for students to network and socialize with industry executives. The SLC can facilitate this process by:

- Maintaining a dedicated SLC position to oversee relationships with the ERC's Industrial Advisory Board (IAB), Foundry program (if available), and students; this position may be called the IAB Chair or SLC/Industry Coordinator
- Helping to organize events such as luncheons or private sessions with industry
- Contributing to resume books and student/company matching programs for internships and full-time positions after graduation.

Conclusion: In order to ensure effective communication with industry and timely promotion of programs, the SLC should dedicate a student specifically to maintaining student-industry relations. It may be necessary to create a committee of students. For these students, primary tasks include gathering student requests for industry interaction and professional development, planning industry seminars, and creating the student resume book. An additional task may be to maintain industry contacts in order to disseminate job and internship information.

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