

Kaleigh McLaughlin

Graduation Year: Senior

College: Engineering

Major(s): Civil Engineering

Minors(s): none

Scholar Group Membership: none

Did you received other funding for this project?: no

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

Project Title: Mitigation Strategies for Strong Currents in Harbors presentation at The National Earthquake Engineering Research Institute Conference

Project Location: Boston, MA

ND Faculty Mentor: Alexandros Taflanidis

Project Type: Conference - Presentation

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for graduate school (MA or PhD), Career discernment and/or preparation

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Very Much

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Yes

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Very Much

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Yes

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Very Much

Tell us about your experience.

My experience at the EERI National Conference included multiple components. First, I presented the research I completed this summer at Oregon State University on Mitigation Strategies for Strong Currents in Harbors. This oral presentation was my first exposure to communicating my work verbally in front of a large crowd, and was an invaluable learning experience. I also presented a poster at a later poster session that contained research that I have conducted over the past two years at Notre Dame in collaboration with graduate student and faculty mentors. This poster was titled "Design, Validation, and Implementation of an Alternative Housing Model in Post-Quake Haiti." This was my first time participating in a poster session discussing this research and had a multitude of positive dialogue with professionals and other students in earthquake engineering on the subject. Finally, I participated with the rest of my team in the undergraduate seismic design competition. This also involved a poster presentation in which the structural design of our balsa wood structure was discussed. In addition to my participation as a presenter at this conference, I was also able to attend many of the concurrent theme sessions discussing special topics in earthquake engineering.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

This was my fourth year at the EERI National Conference, but my first year participating as a presenter in a capacity other than the seismic design competition. It was a great way to communicate the research that I completed this summer at Oregon State in a different capacity (this summer I had participated in a poster session). Both the act of giving an oral presentation and all of the preparation required were an excellent learning exercise for me as a student-scholar. Part of my presentation addressed why the students I was speaking to should consider getting involved in research and attending graduate school. I think that this was a particularly successful part of the presentation after hearing feedback from some of the students who attended the talk.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

I will be attending the University of Texas at Austin next year, pursuing my masters degree in geotechnical engineering. I plan on conducting research in earthquake engineering, and will likely be attending the EERI national conference again in the coming years. My participation as an undergraduate has laid an excellent foundation for me as a graduate student and a young professional, as I have made valuable connections in my field as well gained experience in communicating my research.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

Do not be afraid of presenting your work in front of professionals! The work that you do as an undergraduate can make a difference, and your engagement in research so early in your career is impressive. I was one of a very few number of undergraduates that presenting during the conference in any capacity, and I received a lot of great feedback from some very important people in my field. The sooner you can begin to develop your communication skills in the research field, the better.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.

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