Critique of the Departmental Presentation by Civil Engineering

Civil engineers design, build and maintain our nation’s infrastructure. They take courses in structures, water resources, geotechnical engineering, construction management, and environmental engineering. These courses prepare them to work in large or small firms that are both governmental or private. Although there are specific areas that CE majors can focus in, most students choose the “General Track,” which requires them to take electives in each of the major areas within civil engineering. Because of its breadth, civil engineering is an interesting field, and the presenters for the department were very effective at communicating their enthusiasm for this subject.

Enthusiasm may be hard to define, but you know it when you see it. For instance, the geotechnical presenter had positive body language and used many personal examples to explain the topic. She talked clearly, in an animated voice, using a lot of hand gestures. She also had energy and showed by her facial expression that she was happy to be there and to have the opportunity to talk to our class. One example that stood out in my mind was how geotechnical engineers have to ensure that neighboring buildings are not damaged when a new facility is constructed. The picture of the subway pit right next to a major high-rise hotel brought that message home. Because of the active and interesting presentation style, this presentation kept my attention.

The overall format of the presentation also helped to keep my interest and help me to not get distracted. Several students came in late and were talking. The lead presenter for Civil Engineering got their attention and told them to be quiet. Although he was firm, he was not trying to embarrass anyone, but rather to get everyone’s attention. Once the presentation was underway, the interesting pictures, personal stories, and enthusiasm of the departmental team maintained a quiet and attentive audience. During each of the focus area presentations, the presenters allowed questions. This helped make the talks relevant and also communicated their knowledge about civil engineering. As a result, this presentation made a good impression.

Through these many techniques, the Department of Civil Engineering made a strong presentation. Each presenter showed excitement, both through energy, inflection, and personal example, and through a communicated, genuine desire to inform us about their topic and to teach us. They were courteous in the way they treated late-comers and loud students, while not letting the presentation get out of control. They were also knowledgeable and able to answer questions. Hence, since this presentation was well-prepared and effectively delivered, I was encouraged that it was a beneficial use of my time.