IPWEAQ attends the University of the Sunshine Coast i-Engage event

Craig Moss and I attended the University of the Sunshine Coast i-Engage event on 2 May 2019. These events are Industry Employability Seminars for USC students which offers an opportunity for industry to connect directly with students in Civil Engineering, Town Planning, Environmental Management and other disciplines.

The aim of the event is to:
• learn about potential opportunities and career pathways in our sector and educate students in preparing to enter professional industries
• improve employability skills and give students realistic expectations about the world of work
• hear of anecdotal success stories and case studies of professionals in our industries
• hear about the expectations of recruiters to increase success in job applications and interviews
• improve professional networks

In our presentation, we shared information on the public works sector including what type of work it involves and career prospects for students. The scope of the sector is vast and it was important to convey the opportunities available to future engineers in terms of the variety of work, locations throughout Queensland (and beyond) and also they type of employers from councils to government departments to the private sector. We were delighted to introduce our new Student membership and provide some practical guidelines on how they can connect with the industry whilst studying.

We are grateful to Craig Young and Michael Whereat from the Sunshine Coast Council who also presented with us and inspired the students. Michael shared the work on the Maroochydore Smart City precinct as well as the international broadband submarine cable initiative currently underway. These are exciting and innovative projects right at the doorstep of the university. Craig Young shared his personal story from his days as a student sitting in a lecture theatre thinking about the future, to the various events throughout his career that have led him to the position he now holds. Craig spoke of the importance of having mentors, the opportunity to travel overseas with the IPWEAQ international study tour, winning awards, despite an initial reluctance to enter, and encouraged students to embrace challenges and not be afraid of failure.

The networking event that followed highlighted the importance and value of our role connecting with students. We were inundated with questions and engaged in conversations with students from various disciplines. Question ranged from work placement opportunities, seeking advice on specialisation of skillsets, practical working arrangements eg what it is really like to work full-time, and applicability of theoretical concepts to practical situations. The students were genuinely curious and keen to engage with us, asking for more ways in which they can stay connected during their studies.

We will continue our engagement with universities across Queensland and have already started working on a number of initiatives based on opportunities and needs. We will be involved in events on campus and are grateful to the contribution of our members, like Craig and Michael who are inspiring the next generation. Likewise, IPWEAQ is happy to assist with initiatives your organisation may have with universities and we are keen to learn about these.

Please contact Nadia Marks for further information about university engagement activities.