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ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FOR MATERIALS EDUCATION SYMPOSIA

Over 150 materials educators from around the world share ideas and practical tips at the two 2011 Materials Education Symposia.

The 3rd International and 2nd North American Materials Education Symposia provided extended opportunities for discussion, encouraged the exchange of ideas and experiences related to materials teaching, and fostered an atmosphere of community amongst educators involved in teaching materials science across disciplines including engineering, science, and design. The events were coordinated by Granta Design, with support from an independent academic Advisory Committee and ASM International, the ASEE Materials Division, SEFI, FEMS, TMS, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy at the University of Cambridge.

3rd International Symposium, University of Cambridge, UK, April 7-8

Academics from 26 countries gathered at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, for two days of presentations, discussions, and an open and practical exchange of ideas. The presenters in the opening session inspired the audience with their enthusiasm and demonstrations of a range of creative approaches to materials teaching. The role of IT in the modern lecture theater, and indeed whether it can replace lectures, was discussed in light of participants' experiences. Lively debates also covered issues such as accreditation as well as the place of IT in assessment. The second day was opened by establishing materials as a bridging discipline between many pure and applied sciences. The challenges of 'translating' between these different disciplines came out in the talks, together with practical ideas for how to teach materials in the broader context. Life-long learning and interaction with industry were also key themes, accompanied by discussions on how to deal with challenges such as growing class sizes and suggestions for the best use of available resources.

Read the full report here:

<http://www.grantadesign.com/symposium/cambridge/index.htm>

**2nd North American Symposium, Worcester Polytechnic Institute,
Worcester, MA, USA, March 24-25**

Educators from across North America tackled issues including how to engage students, how to make best use of IT, and how to teach materials in a multidisciplinary environment with particular focus on environmental sustainability. Project based learning, computer-based and remote learning, and interdisciplinary teaching all featured in the discussions and practical suggestions. One debate focused on at what stage the principles of materials

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science should be formally taught. In light of environmental concerns, this question is even more critical: there is no doubt that teaching 'materials and the environment' is essential, but is it practical or even desirable to try to teach this across the whole curriculum instead of in a dedicated course? And how should students be prepared to balance environmental and economic objectives?

Participants at the Symposium valued the opportunity to focus on such fundamental questions for materials education. By the end of two packed days, many practical tips and ideas had been shared, and attendees left with renewed enthusiasm.

Read the full report here: <http://www.grantadesign.com/symposium/us/index.htm>

Looking forward to 2012

Both the International and North American Materials Education Symposia provided excellent venues for a supportive exchange of ideas from those involved in materials education around the world. Feedback from the event was extremely encouraging: there is definitely a need for this kind of collaborative event in materials education. Indeed, several participants commented that the Symposia were probably the largest and most relevant events focussed on undergraduate materials education in the past five years.

In light of this, the Symposia's Academic Advisory Committee is now starting to draw together the key themes and topics for the 4th International and 3rd North American Materials Education Symposium which are to take place at the University of Cambridge and California Polytechnic State University next Spring. In the meantime, thanks must go out to all those whose presentations and contributions made this such an interactive and collaborative event.

About Granta Design Limited

Granta develops the leading software for materials engineering education and the leading software for corporate materials information management. CES EduPack supports innovative teaching and learning at hundreds of universities, making it the world's leading materials and process education package. Granta's enterprise products serve sectors as diverse as aerospace, defense, energy, automotive, motor sport, electronic and electrical, medical devices, publishing, and material production. Granta was founded in 1994 as a spin-off from the University of Cambridge and the work of Professors Mike Ashby and David Cebon. Granta's partners include Cambridge University and ASM International, the world's largest professional society for materials engineers.

Further information

Materials Education Symposia: www.materials-education.com

Granta Design: www.grantadesign.com

ASM International: www.asminternational.org

The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), Materials Division: www.asee.org

The European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI): www.sefi.be

The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society (TMS): www.tms.org

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI): www.wpi.edu

Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy, University of Cambridge: www.msm.cam.ac.uk

Supporting images at: www.grantadesign.com/news/media.htm