

November 2007 Update

From: International Chapters of Students for the Exploration and Development of Space

To: SEDS International Board of Advisers

SEDS-Afghanistan

Name: Ahmad Shah, President

Firstly let me mention that there have never been space related groups, companies, agencies and educational courses for students so far in Afghanistan.

Update on chapter programs in November

After when I attended SEDS International Conference 2007 [SEDSIC, <http://earth.seds.org/sedsic>] in September, I had enough experience to lead my chapter in a better way than ever. Before this in the very beginning of the September I had organized the first-ever space event in Afghanistan, where there was a good focus on my chapter (SEDS-Afghanistan).

The purpose was to attract the attention of the interested students in the field of space sciences; as well as to initiate the activities of my chapter.

This was to make a group of students who will work for the awareness of people regarding space in the future in my country. Fortunately more than 30 university and high school students joined SEDS-Afghanistan.

When I returned from SEDSIC, I tried to stay in touch with my group and I provided some books and magazines from my home collection for some of them just to be in touch with me, and to not leave me alone.

As a result what I did in November is to encourage and inspire the students and to attract more from different universities and schools. So I am doing the initiative activities in my country so far.

Question for advisers: Any ideas which can help me get many people interested and to attract the attention of the government for financial support?

-Ahmad

SEDS-USA

Name: Ryan McLinko, Vice Chair of SEDS-USA, mclinkor@mit.edu

Web site: <http://www.seds.org>

Update on chapter programs in November:

- SEDS-USA Rocket Competition
- SpaceVision 2007 [<http://spacevision.seds.org>]
- Endowment Fund Research
- SEDS History Project
- Developing new Chapter Documentation
- Beginning Renovation of Website

Questions for Advisors:

We have noticed some recent problems with chapter membership recently in that some chapters have not submitted dues this past year since they weren't sure what they were getting out of being formal members of SEDS. We have been detailing some perks to this end, such as privileges at trips to NASA, internship connections, etc, but would be welcome to more ideas to this end.

Also, we are looking into creating an endowment fund (a large fund off out of which the principal will be used to fund SEDS-USA), so are looking into ways to find donors for this and ways to run this fund. Any advice on this front would also be appreciated.

-Ryan

Philippine SEDS (PhiSEDS)

Name: Lavina Parwani, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines,
lavina.parwani@gmail.com

Update on chapter programs in November:

Forum on the Conflict between Science and Religion

Astronomy Session (familiarizing members with our telescopes, and looking at Comet Holmes)

Seminar on Small Satellites (Introduction to CubeSats)

Introduction to Model Rocketry (Workshop)

Questions for advisers:

PhiSEDS (SEDS Philippines) is still in its first year of operation, and the one thing I've found to be of some trouble is getting people excited enough to make the effort to participate in our activities.

Yeah, stargazing and rocketry (among other things) are exciting activities in themselves, but people here are not all too open to it; they need to be inspired beyond listening to me and some of my officers talk passionately about what we do. That said, I'm looking for any ideas that you might have to improve this.

-Lavina

UKSEDS

Name: Alison Gibbings, Vice Chair of UKSEDS,

Update on chapter programs in November:

Update: Hello all. In November we hosted our Annual UKSEDS Conference in Milton Keynes, UK. Although this was quite a quiet event, due to the reduced activity of last year's committee, all the major UK space organisations were represented. Now a new and passionate committee has been elected and we are up for a challenge! The first event for UKSEDS is the attendance at Astrofest in the New Year (<http://www.astronomynow.com/astrofest/>). Then joint with UK space organisations, we are supporting ****The UK Space Conference**** from the 26th-29th March 2008. UKSEDS invites attendance and presentation from all SEDS members and branches world-wide with a hope of creating a wealth of collaboration, communication and partnership, inspiring the next generation. These events are focused in the run-up to the Internationals Astronautical Congress that is being hosted in Glasgow, England. During this event and with help of the British Interplanetary Society, UKSEDS will support and publicise this event. This is coupled with our own UKSEDS Annual Conference and the possibility of combining it with the SEDS-International Conference.

Questions for advisers:

Any comments, suggestions and/or ideas of how working together we can make this all possible?

-Alison

SEDS-India

Name: Pradeep Nair, President of SEDS-India, pradeep@seds.org

Update on chapter programs in November:

We have begun the process of registering SEDS India. We have only one category under which to register under Indian law - Non-profit organisation. We have a programme started up called Indian Student Satellite Project (InStuSat for short -- the short form is actually inspired by Insat which is the name for the Indian Satellite Project). We're gonna try and build a range of satellites beginning with a cubesat - as independently as possible. People are still in their exams this month and the next, so, activities might be a lull for these two months.

Questions for advisers:

1. Students in India are very high up on theory but very low down in practise. I understand that the only answer to this question is practise. But, which are the best systems to begin practising on?
2. As a general question from SEDS-Earth, we were wondering if we could be present at and cover some of the OOSA activities from a student perspective ??

-Pradeep

SEDS Canada

Name: Michael Jensen, President of SEDS Canada, sedscanada.ca@gmail.com

Web site: <http://canada.seds.org>

Update on chapter programs in November:

Ok. Our chapter has been active in it's present incarnation for a little over two years now. Our proposal has been accepted by Bob Richards of optech inc., who is our founder and continued supporter. We have "completed" our constitution although we don't have it available online yet, and we have a bank account.

The major thing we have to report though (my bias) is the website I have been working on since september 2005 [<http://canada.seds.org>]. Lots of time and effort in that one. This is equiped with a database with a search function so that people and chapters can input their information, update it, and it is displayed in a structured manner, and can be searched using innumerable criteria. We intent to make this code available to seds earth, when it comes of age.

Our major challenge now (the site is coming along nicely) is to make contact with all the space related clubs and organizations across canada and get them into the system. We also want to build up a table of space experts who are willing to visit high-schools and universities to motivate and inspire the students, and to guide them in their space education efforts (educating themselves, and those around them).

Another project involves educating the public as well as educating politicians. This project was proposed by the president of the Canadian Space Society, Daniel Faber, and has been taken on by one of our exec members.

What I am spending most of my time doing is communicating with people such as yourselves and trying to bring as many resources together as possible to bring to bear on the challenges at hand (public outreach, internal organization, etc.) Like I said, I would like to provide the international community with the services of the website I have built, assuming that they do not already have something similar.

We would appreciate feedback on all of the projects we have going

However, I would appreciate feedback particularly on another project that I have just begun thinking about, and which it seems I lack critical experience to implement. Peter Diamandis came up with the idea of the X-Prize. I would like to do a similar thing in Canada, as a publicity stunt for SEDS. I would like to make us headline news, associated with something really cool. My general idea was to get funding from somebody somewhere to sponsor a set of prizes aimed at undergraduate and high-school students, with the goal of inspiring leadership within their ranks, and getting the public excited by getting grand seeming projects going that will be relevant to them.

As an example, I am building a glider at home. I would like to offer 10 000 dollars (quasi random number) to each of up to 10-100 people who can pull off something

similar, perhaps given various constraints... the idea would be that the prize winners learn how to build gliders, then they learn how to fly them, then they learn how to teach others in their communities how to do what they did. Perhaps the next step after that could be going a bit higher? building rockets? bigger and faster airplanes? ...

What I have been told on this score is that if you want to start a business (building gliders, and selling them, or lessons on how to fly them), you need to determine what the market is. On the same note, if you want to establish a prize, you have to convince the people putting up the money that they will benefit somehow from having spent it.

My last question would be: What if there are people in Canada working on really cool stuff, but they already have their connections, etc, and don't feel they need to be affiliated with SEDS Canada? Obviously we want to have them establish accounts on our website so that people can learn about who they are and what they are doing. How do we convince them that this is worth doing? (yes, we are planning on asking them what will make SEDS Canada relevant to them)

Ah yes, one more question: We have been offered financial support from Bob Richards, much of it on the condition that we find matching support from somebody else. It is not at all obvious how we should go about doing this. One thing that has occurred to me is selling advertising on the site when we get a big enough membership base...

Secondly, there is the question of when we -do- have money in the bank, how do we spend it? You rapidly realize that most things are not cheap. It seems like there are two types of things you could spend on, travel expenses for people, very expensive, or advertising? What form of advertising? Perhaps we could use it to pay for phone services so that we can call people all over Canada and bug them about making accounts on our website or going to schools and presenting to them? Perhaps we should hire a graphic designer to make us a really awesome website? Pay for the printing of psychedelic posters to put up in subways? Pay for business cards to hand out at conferences? Take the money for ourselves to cover our travel expenses for going to conferences, or to compensate us for the time we have spent building the organization? I have spent thousands of hours for SEDS already.

Looking forward to your answers,

-Mike

Comments from Werner Balogh

Programme Officer, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

ad SEDS-Afghanistan

Dear Ahmad Shah,

I noticed that you are also the focal point for the Space Generation Advisory Council in Afghanistan (<http://www.spacegeneration.org/council>). Have you tried to explore opportunities with the SGAC Secretariat in Vienna ("Agnieszka Lukaszczyk (SGAC Executive Officer)" <a.lukaszczyk@spacegeneration.org>) on how SGAC could possibly help to attract your governments attention?

ad Philippine SEDS (PhiSEDS)

Dear Lavina Parwani,

Getting the attention of people and especially of decision makers is a process that can take some time and thus can also be quite frustrating. In Austria we founded an organization called "Austrian Space Forum (Oesterreichisches Weltraumforum)" back in 1999 (website www.oewf.org, in English: <http://www.oewf.org/cms/english.phtml?PHPSESSID=60833950f22f0da726f661f6f7d84016>). Over the years this organization has grown and now also has access to some funding sources. There is no single recipe for success, but it certainly takes a team of enthusiastic people, a good network (e.g. to universities, aerospace-related companies etc.) that you have to slowly build and activities that raise people's attention. E.g. in Austria we started out with a discussion/presentation evening on Austrian Space activities, to which we invited professors, people from relevant ministries and agencies. Usually people are quite supportive of youth initiatives and indeed it turned out to be a huge success on which we based our next steps. Today the Austrian Space Forum has a wide range of activities, including a number of funded projects and even some temporary, semipermanent staff! This example may not be exactly transferable to your situation in the Philippines, but I think the idea of trying to organize one "kick-start" event to which to invite all possible relevant people might be worth considering.

ad SEDS-India

Dear Pradeep Nair,

I am very happy to hear about your activities! UNOOSA and JAXA, through APRSAF, have been discussing with the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in the Asia and Pacific region in India (<http://www.cssteap.org/>) about a range of educational activities, in particular related to CanSat (and in the future possibly to

CubeSat). It may be helpful to establish contact with Dr. George JOSEPH, Director of CSSTEAP, on cooperation opportunities between SEDS-India and the Centre!

Regarding your second question, I am not quite sure if I understood correctly: Would you like to give a presentation on your activities to OOSA/COPUOS? Indeed there would be a great opportunity for this at the next COPUOS Session which is scheduled from 11 to 20 June in Vienna, Austria. At this COPUOS Session there will be an agenda item on "Space and Society". The focus under this item is on "space and education". For example, SGAC presented under this item in 2007, but it would be great to hear about activities of other organizations, such as SEDS-India and/or other SEDS Chapters (maybe this could also be a coordinated presentation on behalf of all SEDS Chapters?! I would suggest that you contact the relevant persons within the Indian COPUOS delegation about the possibility to have such a presentation organized. If you do not have the relevant contact information, I can try to find it out for you.

Comments from Rei Kawashima

Secretary General, University Space Engineering Consortium

I would like to say "Congratulations to all!" It is amazing to see that students have continued such meaningful activities for many years all over the world and that new groups are still born and start their activities in the same field.

Here are my humble comments to each group.

Comments to SEDS-Afghanistan and Philippine SEDS:

In my limited experiences, it would be effective to create a focus project that would motivate you and attract others. It does not matter whether it is big or small. For example, organizing a satellite design contest does not cost that much, but will be effective to attract the attention of students and potential supporters (technical and financial). It would be easier to ask government to become a sponsor of the contest, because such a project does not require much supports and supporters do not have to promise to support forever.

I think, within your current capacity, that you can do many things. Student activities should focus on what you can do "now." If you dream a big project that you need to collect much money, financial resources will directly limit your activities. Please be aware of your own resources and power.

Comment to SEDS-India

The best system to begin practicing is to begin making something. For example, CanSat is a good tool for hands-on training at entry level. Usually, it takes 3-6 months to complete. There are chances to make experiments with sounding rockets in US and Japan, and of course, you can create a chance in your country, too. Building a nano-satellite is also an option.

Comment to UKSEDS

If you are planning to organize an interesting workshop before IAC, please let me know. I would be happy to circulate the info to Japanese students. We have 450 student members in University Space Engineering Consortium (UNISEC), and I think that several students will participate in IAC, and may be interested in joining your workshop too.

Comment to SEDS Canada

I had a little difficulty to understand your questions. What is your "real" matter? It seems that you want to get financial resources, but that you are not very sure how you should spend them. I think it would be helpful if you could have a chance to consider what you and SEDS Canada want to do/create/experience through SEDS activities.

Comment to SEDS-USA

Regarding the problems with chapter membership, I think that several options would be possible. 1) keep asking to submit dues, 2) remove the chapter from the list after warning several times, 3) let it be, and 4) better idea. How to manage the problems would depend on what you want to do in your activities. If you want to work with only positive groups, 2) would be good. If you want to increase the number of chapters (for lobbying or other reasons), 3) would be good.