



Notes Template for Moderators - 2018 Business Round Tables
Committing to Continuous Improvement
Nashville, Tennessee; Friday, November 2, 2018, 3:20 to 4:45 PM

Table No. (1 to 13): 3 Topic: Welcome Students, What's Next?

Moderators: Kurt Fraese and Pat Klima

Number of participants at 1st session: 11 Number of participants at 2nd session: 12

Insert an abstract of the topic here.

Welcome University Students! What's Next?

- What university do you attend and what is your field of study?
- What expectations do you have of your future employer?
- What value do you see in the engineering profession?
- How do you see the business world?
- What is your biggest take away from attending this GBA Conference?

Briefly summarize the ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	Pay and security are important differentiators when students are comparing potential employers. However, they desire more than just good compensation including having a mentor and a guarantee of ongoing training. They expect their future employers to be “loyal” (i.e. job security). They hope their jobs will evolve and change over time to keep them interesting and challenging. Work-life balance is important to them, they want employers to provide them time to study for the PE and have time for kids and family, “not just work”. Having the respect of their employer is important from the start of their career.
2	The students want to utilize their engineering skills in meaningful ways in their employment. Ways that clearly help others in society. They asked what other skills are the most valuable in employers’ eyes. The employers at the table cited people with relationship and communication skills (soft skills) as being very important to business success. Employers also put value on creative skills and those who are adaptive. One employer offered that firms are looking for employees who are humble, smart and hungry.

3	They would like to start out with “40-hour weeks”. They believe that they are more capable of working harder but for a shorter amount of time than other generations. They don’t want 50-60-hour weeks. They believe they can overcome the hours shortfall because “millennials are very efficient”. They think in algorithms and are more “fluid” with their thoughts than prior generations. Several agreed that their motto should be “work smarter, but not harder”
4	Many have gained experience through internships. They expect more of their employers in providing access to technology and have noted that some employers have not kept up. They like the opportunity to learn and grow with technology. Some have had early experiences where employers expect more of them than they have the capacity for and that concerns them. They want company leaders to set the expectations right up front and must value human interaction, not just to be cast off with tasks to figure out themselves. They shared that millennials in their communications have high expectations for information to be immediately available; “everything must be available on a screen.”
5	They want to work for firms that value people. They believe people who are valued will take better care of the firm’s clients. Relationships matter; they’re looking for good ones, friendly; colleagues that reach out and help. They want to work with engaging people.
6	They see the job market as strong. Many have offers in hand for positions after graduation. Some have multiple offers.
7	A number of the students said that they want to be owners in their future firms. Some want to start their own business. They said that they expect such ownership opportunities to be available within about 6 years of beginning their career. Five of the students said that they want to be managers of their firms.
8	They really liked hearing about the risk management and legal issues presented at the GBA Conference. The wastewater facility fatality presentation got their attention and scared them. It was pointed out that engineers can also be held personally liable in lawsuits. They said that they had not given risk management and professional liability much thought up until now. They see the value and importance of professional organizations like GBA. They are very appreciative of the opportunity to attend the conference. Everything they have heard at the conference provided value for them. They were impressed by the level of sharing between potential competitors. They were encouraged that sharing knowledge was seen as a professional obligation.
9	One student said the value of engineering is “priceless” and others agreed. The engineering profession has made people’s lives better in all corners of society. It was recognized that engineering expertise helps people who can’t help themselves with technical challenges. The notion of engineering as a noble profession was introduced. However, it also was noted that society tends to overlook engineers until construction or infrastructure failure occurs and then engineers are blamed.
10	Grad school is important most of the participants were already pursuing masters degrees or were planning to.

Summarize the three most important items from the discussion that should be shared with GBA members:

1	<p><i>A provocative question was posed to the group: who is going to win the battle for advancing technology in the profession... engineering firms that understand and leverage technology or technology firms that understand and leverage engineering?</i> Students expressed confidence in their understanding and use of technology and its potential. Some believe that technology firms will win out over the engineering firms, because they perceive that engineering firms are slow to adopt new technology. Others were confident that engineers would maintain the upper hand in applications of engineering utilizing technology. One student is pursuing a career in artificial intelligence applications as the ultimate change agent. Virtual reality also was cited as powerful technology to watch as both a threat and opportunity. Technology was discussed as both a tremendous tool and an ultimate threat for the profession and the primary change agent of the future. The students said the value proposition is good if technology if it is used in helping society. It was noted that in general technology lacks ethical standards as compared to engineering.</p>
2	<p>It's an employee market. The students were confident in their round table discussions about their job prospects. They expect a lot of their employers and in particular, have the expectation of time flexibility and limits on the number of hours they are required to work.</p>
3	<p>There is an entrepreneurial spirit and confidence. Many expressed an interest in being owners of their firms and/or starting a practice of their own. While some expressed reservations about professional liability, most said that the business risks and challenges were worth it and see the opportunity to have fulfilling careers.</p>