ProCSI 2009 Student Feedback

Dan Negrut: So here's what I'm going to do, I'm going to record this, ok? Because this is what we did last year as well and we wanna keep track of how things change from year to year. So I'm going to set this here.

Student: What's that?

Dan Negrut: This is a recorder… it's not going to explode, ok? So the only thing I wanted to talk with you about was some impressions of this thing. What you liked and what you didn't like. Of course, in an ideal world it'd be all basketball and soccer and volleyball and eat and sleep and all over again, but it is not what the organization that gave us money wanted us to do. So you have to understand that when I ask you what you wanted to change, don't just say "Let's have basketball in the morning and soccer in the evening". So be constructive and try to, in good faith, think of what would make this better. In good faith. So let's start by posing this question, "What would you do to make this better?". And you each get a chance to talk for 2-3 minutes, so STUDENT would you like to start? But speak up because we need to tape that.

Student: I would say, make the program longer, and it'd be better if there was more people.

Dan Negrut: There were 3 more people who didn't show up so next year, we'll try two things: we'll get more money to try and get more people into it, and we'll try to overbook because always, you know, someone's cat is dying or you know and they don't show up. But in the end, we'll try to do those things. Bring more people onboard by getting more money and just having more people than seats available.

Student: Just making the program overall longer… like two weeks or something. Just so we can cover much more material about engineering, because there is still a lot of stuff that we didn't cover, but we still covered a lot of stuff that we didn't know about like friction stir welding, the computer science stuff, and the stuff about the panel with the college kids, talking about their major in civil engineering and all of the types of engineering that we didn't cover, but other than that it was a good program. It was just for a week and we didn't get to know each other on the first day, so we only got to know people for the last few days.

Dan Negrut: Sounds good, who's next?

Student: I think I would like, when the person is talking, giving lectures, they should have an activity to do that teaches you what they are talking about, so we don't get tired of that they are always talking about stuff, that they're always talking continuously, nonstop.

Dan Negrut: So to translate, more hands-on stuff? So more interactive things, instead of lectures and power points?

Student: Because after we eat, we just come back here and sit down, and we get really tired because of that.

Dan Negrut: Sounds good. Just hold on a second, let him finish. So, was that it?

Student: Yeah, I think that was it.

Dan Negrut: Okay, because I will come around and ask what you liked, but right now, we'll talk about what you didn't like and how you think we can change so that the guys who come next year will enjoy it more. Are you done?

Student: Yeah, I'm done.

Dan Negrut: Okay, STUDENT. What didn't you like?

Student: I'm not going to say that I didn't like it, but it would be better if after a presentation, there would be something to go along with it, something to bring home, because some people may not have caught everything and I would like something on paper so when I go home I can reference back to it.

Dan Negrut: Sounds good, here's what we can do. There is a website, you know that website, right? Because you downloaded many things from that website, with the computer game and those files for the CAD file and such. So what we can do, if you want to reference back to material that was presented, we will put links to the power point presentations that we had during the week. Sounds good? At least, it's something that you can go back and look at, if you ever care what engineering is or what mechanical engineering is or whatever, you will have a place that you can refer back to. Okay, who is next? You? Okay let me move this. I'll put it here in the middle. Okay, go ahead.

Student: I think that it would be better that when we first got here we had more time to explore the city, maybe have an extra day to explore the city. Just to take time to go and shop and visit stores and see what's out there. I guess part of the program was to promote kids to go to Madison, but I would like to see what's in Madison before I go.

Dan Negrut: Fair remark. Anything else before the next person goes?

Student: No, that's it.

Student: I just wanna say that I love you all. On the first day, I wasn't quiet, I was trying to meet all of you. So I was just trying to meet new people, I didn't care about the lectures, I mean, I listened, but it was fun.

Dan Negrut: So we'll talk about that later, but right now, what didn't you like?

Student: Well, we could make it longer, and more people. That would be nice.

Student: Like on the first day, when people started coming in. Have more activities, so people can interact more and start knowing each other on the first day. See what I'm saying?

Dan Negrut: Yeah, so do what, start earlier? Like earlier in the morning?

Student: I mean, like do more activities, more group activities, so people could start knowing each other more. Like games and stuff like that, because it took a couple of days before we started knowing each other. Because people were more quiet on the first day, like "I don't wanna talk to you". Like him, it was weird, I met him on the bus.

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: Okay, what else?

Student: It'd be nice if it was longer… yeah. Because one week is kinda short, if you really think about it.

Dan Negrut: Here's the deal, this program was not meant to be two weeks. The purpose of the program is two-fold. One is to convince you to go to college, and if possible, go to University of Wisconsin. And the so that is primarily for seniors. So for the rest, for the other people, you have the opportunity, and this is the second goal, if you would like this, you have the opportunity to get into the six week program, you know, the ESP program. And that's next year, ok? So if you liked this program and you wanna stay longer here and you wanna meet people, then next year, you can apply for ESP. The good thing is you met Molly Davis, you know Molly right? She was there for the roundtable discussion and she had pizza with us and she knows you. We know each other and we work together so I can definitely write a letter if you wanna get into ESP thing, on your behalf. I don't think I can have this two weeks long, to be honest. But if you are interested in this, there are programs for you. Fair? Someone was going to say something.

Student: Yeah another one, I would like to visit more of Madison. Like State Street.

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: At night, if possible? STUDENT, any other ideas? So STUDENT, what didn't you like?

Student: The lack of people was the only thing I found that was sorta weird. Other than that, I guess I may just be weird, but I liked working on math and stuff. So, a little bit more labor intensive in the classroom to keep us interested, besides that I think it's fine. It's a pretty good program.

Student: Like he said, when you are learning something and they're trying to explain that there are math equations behind it and all the stuff it would be cool to learn what the math equations are and do and actually see what we are doing on the computer like when we are simulating something. Then a lot more hands on stuff, like give us examples to do about what you are talking about so that we can get a visual pictures. Not everyone thinks the same, so if we have multiple examples of what you're talking about, more people are able to understand what you are talking about and they won't fall asleep. And then the people thing, I know there wasn't anything you could do about it this year, if you have more people because like what he said about the first day when no one wanted to talk but he has that personality of outgoing and stuff and he's going to talk, and if you have more people you will have more of those people so that we would get to know each other faster. Because he just starts conversations even if it is about nothing important. I mean, it may have no point but it helps us come out of the shy box that we had when we first got here. On the first day, more get-to-know-you games and like

encourage the kids, you're going to be here for a week and it's going to fly by really fast, so on the first day do those games so everyone can get to know each other. Like the scavenger hunt, in my group, nobody really talked, so I just talked to, I think it was Toby in my group, I just talked to him most of the time.

Dan Negrut: So probably, thinking in retrospective, it probably wouldn't be a bad thing to have the scavenger hunt towards the end of the program, when people know each other and they are curious about learning more about Madison. Probably have that first day, when people come in, have some games or activities where you interact more with each other.

Student: And get to through the names earlier. I know we went through the names and stuff during dinner, but I think we should have done that earlier because I was just in my group, thinking "dang, I forgot their name".

Student: I'm really bad with names, so maybe do it multiple times.

Dan Negrut: So next year, we will probably have some name tags.

Student: I mean we might not even need name tags, but do a game.

Student: Do a game, even if it is saying your name and something unique about it to help people remember it.

Dan Negrut: Sounds good. Go ahead.

Student: I liked a lot of the stuff we did, but some of it wasn't keeping my concentration. I would sit there and not really pay attention. If people talk in a monotone, it is really hard to understand. The presenters should try to include every time, a like "so have you done this", and include everyone in it so that they don't fall asleep or get bored and put it in a way that they understand.

Student: You guys feed us too much.

Student: The meal times were close together. The food was good.

Student: I'm not tripping though, because I don't get this at home.

Dan Negrut: Okay, STUDENT, tell us what you didn't like, turn around and speak into the device there.

Student: I didn't like the presentations were too long.

Dan Negrut: Which presentations?

Student: Like the ones we had every morning. We didn't get any hands-on stuff. Like we just sat here and listened to them, that's all we did.

Dan Negrut: So what would you like to see?

Student: More hands-on stuff.

Dan Negrut: Good. Something else, we'll get to you in a second.

Student: That's all.

Student: Okay I got a question, what's his name, Muhammad? The little short guy, with the umm.

Students: Makarand.

Student: Yeah, Makarand. He had like a strange accent.

Student: Are you serious?

Student: It was a strong accent.

Student: Yeah, so I mean, when he asked us if we could understand his accent, I mean, what was he going to do?

Student: I mean, I think for the most part when he asked us that, could you understand him? In the beginning, he was being really conscious about it, and then as he got farther wrapped up in it, he forgot about it.

Student: I understood him most of the time.

Student: I understood him.

Dan Negrut: STUDENT, do you understand what I am saying?

[Laughter]

Student: I mean, it was kinda hard to understand him at first, but I got used to it.

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: That's not nice, man.

Student: He did hands-on activities, like where we got to see what we were learning. But when we did them, if we tried to do something that was different from the way he had it done, he wouldn't let us do it. So if we would try and figure it out on our own, to try and understand it better, he just had to do it one way, and not everyone can understand it from that one way. Like, everyone comes in from different angles.

Student: Are we done with the bad stuff?

Student: I just have one more thing. How like, we didn't really get to know each other until the end, so like if somebody, I don't know, stay there. Have somebody from the year before, because they will be the same age group, they can come back and talk to the kids and tell them that it is going to go by fast, and encourage them to get to know each other, and come in from that angle, so that they won't be all shy and stuff.

Dan Negrut: I guess we should have done that better, because we don't need someone from the previous year. I mean, we just dropped the ball on it. We assumed that you knew eachother well, because some of the guys came on the same bus from Chicago. I was hoping it would be simpler. But it seems like everyone is complaining about that so next year we will be more careful. And that is the purpose of the discussion, because to me, it was obvious that that was okay, but for 3 or 4 of you, you are saying that it was slow and boring to start out and you didn't know each other and you didn't interact as much but we got it, and we will try to take care of it. Fair? Okay, anything else that people wanna say about the modules?

Student: No, it was great.

Dan Negrut: Okay, then let's move on and talk about good stuff that we should keep for next year.

Student: The good things about it is that we learned a whole lot of stuff about different types of engineering, what there was civil, industrial, mechanical, we learned about different types of sciences, we learned how to make a vase out of software that was created here or whatever, and we just learned about different stuff that helps us understand what goes on in engineering. The food was awesome! I feel like a camel, I don't have to eat for a month.

Student: The magic dude, I think you should get that for next year, I know people are going to enjoy that. Because especially in the middle of the week, when it gets slow, then that kinda picks stuff up. And then the NASA guy, I don't know if he can come back next year, but if he can, you should definitely get him, because he was good. Even though I dozed off for awhile, when I woke up, I learned a lot. So you should definitely keep him.

Student: Well for me, I liked actually doing the hands-on with like making the little Buck Badger, and making the plastics, and watching the welding. Like actually watching them do it, it actually brings more to the table than some people just telling you about it. It is better to see it, because it gets you more excited and more into it.

Student: Hmm, let's see. Breakfast… it was so good. I'm sorry. No, I really liked the presentations, I never fell asleep by the way. What else? I don't know I think it is overall a pretty great program.

Student: What you should bring back, you know that little panel, with the four people? Talk about like college and stuff like that, that was good because it kinda gives the perspective of college, and what to look for in college.

Dan Negrut: The pizza thing?

Student: Yeah, the pizza thing, you should definitely bring that back next year too.

Student: And also, the admissions lady. You should definitely keep that so that people get guided into the right direction. Because, a lot of people can tell you, "you need to get on this" or "you need to do that", but when you hear from admissions, I mean that's their job to accept or reject people, I mean, it makes you pay attention and realize that that's what you have to do to get into college.

Dan Negrut: Thanks for telling us that, because honestly I thought that that would be a little bit boring, but you are telling me otherwise. Thank you.

Student: On Wisconsin!

[Cheers]

Student: I like how nobody here in this group have ever met before, but we kinda just gradually began to talk a little more and more constantly, and we become more annoying.

[Laughter]

Student: And then we go to different food places and try out their really good food. Now I know that some places I am going to go to constantly now. And after all the lectures at night, we all just hang out and laugh together, and scare each other.

[Laughter]

Student: It's a great program. Wonderful, actually.

Student: Wonderful.

Student: We also, I mean, I like the fact where, we tried to change stuff or bring up stuff, like, why can't we do this or that. But you kinda kept to what you wanted and even food places, we may have said, why don't we go here, but it is better for exposure to not change what you had planned.

Student: I wanted to go to McDonald's, you know?

Student: I hate that place!

Student: Did he just say McDonald's?

Student: Yeah, it's so bad.

Student: Yeah, what he was saying, where we all got to know each other, like for the most part, we don't have any cliques here, like it is not really a high school environment here. It is all laid back and like we are all friends and we joke around a lot too.

Dan Negrut: I mean to a large extent, and they can probably can say whether it is true or not, when you go to college, that high school atmosphere goes away, and I am not saying that it is as laid back as it was here, but I must say, it is a much nicer environment to be in when you are in college because there you know, you do whatever you wanna do, for better or for worse, and you don't have to hang out with the same people for the longest time. If you don't like them, you meet new people and go out and do what you like, study when you want, again, for better or for worse. But it changes, and it is natural to be like that, and I think the two of you, because you're undergrads, Toby you were an undergrad fairly recently, but is that right, or not? Was it much nicer in college opposed to high school in terms of interacting with new people and the classrooms and such. Because I didn't go to school here. I didn't do my undergrad

here and I didn't go to high school here, but just like looking at people, and reading and watching movies and such, that's my impression.

Toby Heyn: I think that, what you guys probably experienced too, but what I appreciated was that, assuming a lot of people probably lived in the same hometown for 10 or 15 years or your whole life, so everyone you've gone to school with you since you've been going to school with since you've been five years old knows you a certain way, so they've had 7 or 10 or 12 years to know you as the kid who plays basketball all the time, or the kid who plays clarinet or whatever, but they know you really specifically, but when you come to college you can kinda start fresh and no one knows anything about you and everyone's the same way so, you guys don't know each other, a lot of you don't, so everyone's free from stereotypes almost, free from preconceived notions, that's what I really liked, because I lived in the same town all my live and when I got here it was a fresh start kind of.

Student: Dan?

Dan Melanz: Nobody cares what I have to say… No. When you get here, you are all in the same boat, it's a new thing, new chapter of your life, college is starting, so you see a lot of people starting to group together again. I would really encourage you in your first couple months of college when there's this window of opportunity, to meet everyone, everybody is willing to be your friend, speak to the person sitting next to you in class, just make friends. Everyone is willing to, it seems like, so I would totally agree with Dan and Toby with what they said.

Student: I like the racing game, that should be kept next year, and I like that he explained how he made it and how much work was put into it. I think next year if you tweak it, you should give them this version, and have them play this one first because this one is challenging and it's fun.

Hammad Mazhar: I should have showed you last year, it was… it was even worse.

[Laughter]

Hammad Mazhar: So the controls were with the mouse, right? And the keyboard if you let go of the key, it automatically returns to the center, but the mouse you have to move to the center of the screen to go straight, you had to go back and forth, I mean you could turn at 200 miles per hour, it didn't matter. It was just really unrealistic.

Dan Negrut: The funny thing was, that people still really liked it.

Hammad Mazhar: Yeah, people still liked it. I don't know why.

Student: Yeah, I'm not a big video game person, I don't really have video games. But when I play racing games I'm not the best at it, if I was really good at it and it was super easy, I wouldn't want to do it.

Hammad Mazhar: Because then it wouldn't be realistic, I guess?

Student: Yeah, and I don't know, if it is easy to figure out, like the challenge is fun, because you had to figure out how to control the car. I thought the game was realistic, because when it swerved, the same

thing you would do in a regular car worked for the game. So if you thought about that when you like spun out, turn the opposite way and the car would eventually get straight, I thought that was cool. That was really cool. And then I liked the vase thing too, that was really fun, because we got to make it from the beginning and see what we were doing in the program and then um, mine was really cool. And then, I liked seeing how it worked, we got to play around with it. Like a lot of the other presentations we didn't get to play around with it much, we did a test one where we got to play around with that one and then we got to figure out how to make the next one, and I thought that was really fun. There were different things you could do to make it different and we got to put it in a room and simulate how it looked like and the colors were really fun even though they turned out weird sometimes, and I liked that. That should be in next year too, or maybe not doing a vase, but something more challenging, they are challenging. The talk with the four, no, five people, the panel, that was good. That put a whole new perspective on stuff, and I liked how they were really assertive and like "email me" and you can talk to these people to get your foot in the door for college and stuff. And then, the admissions lady, that was good, I wasn't bored at all. Like, because this is kinda a new thing, I though college was college, but there is a lot of stuff that you have to think about for and while applying for colleges like thinking ahead and I didn't know a lot of the steps that she told us. So that was really good, and she was really cool so you should get her, unless, if she is the only one, never mind, but if there is two, you should get her.

Hammad Mazhar: But you haven't met the second person.

Student: I know, but she was really cool, and she didn't let anyone slack off and she kept everyone on task… I talk a lot don't I?

Dan Negrut: Calm down, are you done though?

Student: Hold on, I had one more thing, but I forgot it.

Student: With the video game, I liked falling off of the track, I liked seeing the flaws in something, knowing that something could go wrong, and there's going to be a way to fix it and you could update stuff and things constantly need to be updated, and it never just ends, it just gets better and better over time. And the counselors were great, everyone helping out.

Student: Except Big Dan, he was the worst.

[Laughter]

Toby Heyn: That's not funny.

[Laughter]

Student: Am I allowed to add to your racing thing again? So like, with the racing thing, I thought it was really good, because there was flaws in the program, I mean not to me because I am not really good at video games anyway, and then I was like "wow, this is hard" and then you came over and told me that it was a month's process and there was flaws, it just put a new perspective on the respect that people

should have for engineers and how much work goes into what they do. It just puts a whole new perspective on it.

Dan Negrut: Let me ask you something else, was the dorm okay?

Student: Yeah, I liked it.

Student: Wait, the mattress was hard!

Student: Like bricks!

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: You got a taste of what college is like. You stayed in a college dorm, you ate in a college cafeteria.

Student: People actually live there during the year?

Dan Negrut: Yep. Dan, is that right?

Dan Melanz: Yep. I eat there every day during the year actually.

Student: You lived in those dorms?

Dan Melanz: Yep.

Student: So during the year, can you not get in after ten?

Dan Melanz: No.

Student: I was going to say, because that's unrealistic, I mean college kids don't have a curfew most of the time.

Dan Negrut: Food was okay?

Student: It was great!

Student: Food was excellent!

Student: I honestly loved it. I think if I was in my bed, I would get a cramp, because my bed is flexible, you can like, sink in.

Dan Negrut: I can't help you there, man.

Student: Them beds felt like steel wool or something.

Student: They keep your body straight!

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: Okay, STUDENT, say a couple of words, what did you like?

Student: Who are you asking?

Dan Negrut: He's thinking.

Student: I liked the soccer game and stuff that we played, and also, the computer science presentation, I liked that. And also the video games that we played.

Dan Negrut: Has anyone changed his or her perspective on engineering after this?

Student: Like what you wanted to get into?

Dan Negrut: I will get back to that. Okay [names students].

Student: I got more respect for my dad now, because I didn't know what engineering was all about.

Dan Negrut: I should probably call your dad and tell him that, that will make him really happy. Or you just tell him, because right there, you get yourself a new pair of sneakers. That'll make him really happy, just tell him that. Okay, in terms of, who changed, what did you ask?

Student: What you wanted to go into?

Dan Negrut: Yeah, who changed what you wanted to go into?

Student: We were talking about mechanical engineering and what it involves and there are two different processes and why stop in the middle, because now I want to learn more about mechanical and chemical because I wanted to go into chemical, but I haven't taken physics yet.

Dan Negrut: You have two years to think about it, and you should go to ESP next year.

Student: I want to.

Student: It changed my perspective of engineering because at first, I thought, if you made a desk, it is just a desk. If you were an engineer, you would be like, that desk is standing up because of me, you can sit in it and it'll hold you up, because of me. Like, I like that.

Dan Negrut: That's very nice. Okay, do you have questions for them? Toby, Hammad, Big Dan?

Dan Melanz: Sounds like we are getting hungry.

Dan Negrut: Okay let me tell you one thing, okay? Big Dan, you didn't have a presentation, I didn't have one either, I just…

Hammad Mazhar: Paid for everything.

Dan Negrut: I didn't pay for anything. At the end of the day, the way I look at it, is very simple. You are going to leave, hopefully all of you are going to be healthy and everyone is going to be fine. The two of

you the life expectancy, right now is 82, by the time you are that age it'll probably be 85-87. You guys, it looks like, 80 to 83 years old. That's life expectancy. So you should expect to work for 45 years of your life. You don't yet understand what that means, I am not 45, yet. So think of it this way, you can spend 4 years and live well for 45 years. Or you can mess around and have fun for 4 years and you'll be walking for the next 45 years. Do you remember when you asked me, "Man, I don't wanna climb the stairs, where's the elevator?", do you remember that?

Student: When was that?

[Laughter]

Student: That was everyday.

Student: Happened more than once.

Dan Negrut: It was either Tuesday or Wednesday. So think about, you can either ride the bus for 45 years, or you can walk for 45 years and it all boils down to the next 4 years, or college or no college. So I can pitch it in different ways, but this is fairly basic and you understand at this level. You can ride the bus for 45 years, or maybe have your own car, or you can walk for 45 years and ask, "Where is the elevator?" and spend your life asking that.

[Laughter]

Dan Negrut: And you'll get a small job here and a small job there. And you'll have kids, and your kids won't look up to their daddy, because their daddy tells them that they are going to walk now. Now you might think that 4 years is a lot. When I was 16, four years was 25% of my life. But when you are 40 and you look back, 4 years is like that. It passes really, really quickly. You have really different perspectives on what time is like compared to what an older person has. So don't look at four years like "this is the end of the world". No. Four years? Not only is it going to be fun and fly by, but it'll put you in a position where you are not going to start begging around for jobs, you'll have a good job where you start with 45 to 50 thousand dollars a year, and from there it'll be up, and it all boils down to a decision you are making now. I am not telling you, go home and study hard, probably not even my kids will listen to that, but you guys have to decide what you wanna do, do you wanna walk for 45 years or do you wanna ride for 45 years? And on that note, let's go have some burgers and some hot dogs.

Student: Do we have to walk or ride, or can we drive?

Dan Negrut: Hey, when you get to that level you can buy your own car, you don't have to ride the bus.

[Laughter]