

Writing 1E: Journal Assignment #A

Engineering Professional Societies

Background

Imagine what would happen to the electronics industry—not to mention the safety of consumers and service personnel—if red, black and green were not generally adopted as the standard wire colors to mark positive, negative, and ground, respectively. What if every electronics manufacturer simply made up their own wiring color scheme?

Professional societies exist in every discipline and profession and date back centuries to the first craft guilds of Europe. They often have local or regional chapters where professionals meet, and most hold regular conferences to discuss topics of importance to members. Most larger societies also publish at least one journal where members can share research and discuss new ideas.

Professional societies within the engineering discipline have had a profound influence upon the development of ideas and industry standards. The IEEE and ASME, for example, have drawn up industry standards that are used by virtually every electronics and machinery business in the world; many of their standards are adopted into law. The new ideas and research that are shared within their journals often become tomorrow's mainstream ideas, and the transfer of knowledge that occurs between older and younger members guarantees the continuance of the engineering profession. A great deal of hiring is conducted at society conferences—another excellent reason to join one.

As a UCSB College of Engineering student, you are required to join an engineering professional society of your choosing sometime during the first quarter. Preferably, the society you join will have a UCSB chapter where you can meet with other engineering students (both undergraduate and graduate) and faculty. The selection of an engineering professional society is entirely up to you, and your choice does not have to directly relate to your major. (E.g., if you are chemistry major, you can join ASME. Similarly, a mechanical engineer can join AIChE. You may also join more than one society.) The advantages of joining at least one society within your major, however, should be obvious.

Journal Writing Tasks

1. Examine the [list of UCSB student organizations](http://engineering.ucsb.edu/undergraduate/student-life-resources/engineering-student-organizations) (under the category of “Career/Professional”), then select two (2) professional societies that you are interested in possibly joining. Note that the UCSB list is hardly exhaustive (there are hundreds of such societies); however, all of the listed ones have student chapters on our campus and you should start there.

COE listing: <http://engineering.ucsb.edu/undergraduate/student-life-resources/engineering-student-organizations>

2. Go to the websites of the two professional societies that most interest you and learn all you can about them. Use your journal to take notes on which areas of engineering they cover and what sorts of activities they sponsor. Look at the most recent copies of their online journal(s) to peruse the types of writing they publish and topics covered. Determine what a student membership costs, and whether they offer a student waiver or scholarship for those who cannot afford the membership fee. Jot all of this down in your journal in summary fashion.
3. Reflect for 1–2 paragraphs about what draws you most to the two societies you have selected for study. What other societies might interest you? Why?

Future Follow-Up

In a future journal assignment a listing of the UCSB student chapter contacts will be made available to you via hardcopy. You will then be expected to visit at least one of the UCSB chapter meetings and write about your experience. More on that later...

In the meantime, you may join any society you wish—on or off campus—on your own.

IMPORTANT NOTE! Most engineering professional societies (including all UCSB chapters) offer student membership rates that are much cheaper than the rates for working professionals. Most also have scholarships or waivers for financially needy students who cannot afford membership fees. Don't let money stand in the way of joining! Contact the professional society directly to see whether they offer a reduced student discount or waiver and let them know that you are a UCSB engineering student. (It may help to use your student email address when contacting them.) If their membership fee is too high for you, explain this and request a waiver—many will comply with your request!

Due Date

See course website schedule.