



engineers without borders
ingénieurs sans frontières
Canada

University of British Columbia Chapter

Engineers Without Borders UBC

This document is a summary detailing how the \$6,748 from the EUS Tuition Fee Referendum was used in the EWB UBC 2006/2007 year.

As described in the Referendum Description that was available on Webvote during the referendum, and as discussed at the EUS Council Retreat at the Whistler lodge in 2005, the money collected from the tuition fees, totalling \$2 per student, would be split into the following three initiatives:

- 1. The Bridging The Gap Conference: \$2,249.33 used from tuition referendum money (overall conference budget was \$2,285.30)**

Each year, the UBC chapter of EWB holds the “Bridging the Gap Conference,” a one-day conference on International Development. This event brings in members of the UBC and local community to gather together to discuss and learn about the issues of development and sustainability. This was a fantastic opportunity for students and non-students alike to learn about how people engage themselves in striving towards the end of poverty. There was a keynote address by UBC International Politics Professor Michael Byers and international development expert Rosanna Hille. The conference was also be a great way to do some networking with industry professionals and generally increase attendees’ knowledge of what it means to be a global citizen.

One of the main points of this conference was to highlight the role of technology in international development. To this end, Dr. David Irvine-Halliday spoke about his organization, Light Up The World, who disseminates solid-state lighting technology to developing countries in south Asia. In addition, two returned overseas EWB volunteers spoke about their projects, which included diesel engine technology in Ghana and dam building initiatives in Zambia.

This year’s Bridging the Gap Conference focused on Canada’s role in international development, highlighting the areas in which Canada is a leader in the field and, more importantly, the ways in which Canada must improve if the country wishes contribute to the end of poverty. The conference was an opportunity for everyone to learn something: from people with a real interest in development to people who’ve never even thought about it.

The conference was held on March 10, 2007 in the Forestry Science Center at UBC. In addition to the conference content, a full lunch was included.

2. The Junior Fellowship Program : \$2,249.33 used from tuition referendum money (overall Junior Fellowship Program costs \$13,000 per year)

The Junior Fellowship is a four-month overseas volunteer placement. This program is open to EWB chapter members who will be returning to their chapter for at least one year following their summer abroad. While the four month placement overseas is the highlight for many, the program also includes the completion of learning modules prior to going overseas, a week-long pre-departure training, and a commitment to sharing their experiences and lessons learned with their community and chapter upon their return.

This program serves to build on the trusting, strong relationships EWB has with our overseas partners in Africa. All Junior Fellows are rigorously trained to be able to maximize their impact in the relatively short 4-month placement. Currently, EWB UBC is supporting two Junior Fellows in Africa, Jad Saab and Tyler Algeo.

Jad is working with the Rural Enterprises Project in Ghana. The Rural Enterprises Project (REP) is a poverty alleviation organization in Ghana that supports the creation and growth of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the rural regions of Northern Ghana. The office in which our overseas volunteers work is responsible for coordinating training services, credit services and business counseling for women and underemployed youth in the rural districts of the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions of Ghana. Jad is working at the grassroots level with the beneficiaries of the project to ensure that it has as much impact as possible on the communities it is intended to help.

Tyler is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MACO) in the Southern Province in Zambia, which gets the least rain in the country. During the rainy season, there are enough rivers and streams to support local agriculture, but they dry up during the hot season. As such, in order to allow farmers to access water year round, the MACO built earth dams to “catch” the rain before it made its way to the Zambezi river. The villages in the region wanted these dams, but once they were built, no one had the necessary expertise or inclination to maintain them. Tyler’s project is to enter communities and mobilize them to take ownership of these dams and learn how to maintain them so that they can have adequate, safe water for the entire year.

3. Travel/ Registration Funding for the EWB National Conference in Calgary, Alberta: \$2,249.33 used from tuition referendum money (overall member travel and registrations costs not documented, but a good estimate is approximately \$9000)

The EWB National Conference is the biggest and most important event of the year for our organization. The money from the Tuition Fee Referendum was used to partially subsidize travel and registration expenses for the 23 delegates from UBC who attended the conference.

Over 400 people came to the EWB National Conference, an opportunity for community members, students, and development practitioners to come together and share ideas for 3 full days. At this conference, there were opportunities for attendees to learn about the three dimensions of EWB and poverty alleviation. First, EWB’s Overseas programs: through

Overseas Volunteer presentations to show the impact we are having overseas, through workshops to get us to reflect further on poverty and development, and through panels to hear different perspectives on what's being done and what still needs to be done overseas.

There was also a chance to learn about EWB's In Canada programs: through panels to learn how others are already making change and to question how we should go about making change, through workshops to become effective communicators, and through a plenary session that will address corporate social responsibility in Canada. The possible learning experiences were boundless, but perhaps most importantly, there was a chance to learn about EWB's third dimension: our People.

Three key areas of leadership were identified and explored throughout the conference:

1. Influence or the ability to affect the thoughts, opinions and actions enables a leader to create positive change in colleagues, peers, and in the local, national and global community.
2. Innovation is the ability to seek out new solutions, new opportunities and to not be satisfied with the status quo. It is innovation that enables growth.
3. Insight is the ability to self-evaluate, self-assess and self-reflect. This means discussing one's strengths and one's weaknesses such that actions and initiatives are effective.

Attendees, upon learning and sharing all their lessons, were encouraged to ask themselves these questions:

What will it take for EWB to achieve excellence and be leaders in every aspect of our activities?

What do YOU need to learn at this conference to become a Leader for Change and to be a powerful element of your chapter?

What do you have to contribute to other delegates and how will you go about sharing?