

Notes on WEFTEC experience

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WEAO was represented by a team of four students from the University of Guelph at this year's WEFTEC Student Design Competition (SDC). They presented their design solution for the problem described by WEAO, which was a stormwater system retrofit for Exhibition Place in Toronto, Ontario. The team described a holistic approach for designing Low Impact Development (LID) controls and were able to considerably improve modelled stormwater conditions for simulated storm events by managing and treating stormwater on the site. The SDC offered a glimpse of the vastly distinctive design challenges, and proposed solutions, from across the continent. The team placed first in the environmental design category, out of six teams.

The team attended the remainder of the WEFTEC conference, which featured an exhibition hall, technical sessions, social events, and more. Such events were particularly opportune, as all team members recently graduated. Being a Canadian team, members were originally doubtful about networking opportunities, given the apparent dominance of American companies – however we were pleasantly surprised to find Ontarian organisations to be incredibly well represented. Moreover, the exhibition and technical events provided attendees with an understanding of the current status of the water industries. They learned about existing industry challenges, cutting-edge technologies, and research associated with the wastewater and stormwater sectors.

The team also found time to enjoy the City of Chicago, by means of sneaking out of the conference to explore the Field Museum of Natural History. Moreover, they made use of the Divvy bike sharing system to discover Chicago's historic landmarks and architecture.

In summary, conference was a remarkable experience. Not only for the aspects related to professional development, but also for the human connection, and connection to the city. The team would once again like to thank WEAO for affording them this incredible opportunity, their advisor Dr. Andrea Bradford, the WEFTEC SDC organizers, participating student teams, and everyone who offered their guidance and support over the course of the project.