



Student Chapter of the System Dynamics Society

“Snowball” 1st Newsletter of the Student Chapter

Dear Member of the Student Chapter of the System Dynamics Society,

Michael Radzicki mentioned in his talk in Nijmegen that the System Dynamics Society is not perfect, but has achieved many goals. When asking the question “How can everyone contribute to the fostering of the society?”, the natural answer is that the contribution can be done on a personal basis and through the various Chapters of the Society.

The Student Chapter of the System Dynamics Society, as an official institution, also wants to contribute to the development of the SD Society as a whole. In order to do that, we need new tools for communication and more effective participation of the students. This first newsletter is one of such tools, and focuses on how we, as members of the Student Chapter, can help the development of the Chapter, benefit from it, and support the growth of the Society.

The Student Chapter website has been updated. We encourage you to visit the website (www.sdstudentchapter.org) and make it widely known among your peers, thereby contributing to a fast integration of it into the internet community. Wider and better communication means: more people involved, more resources and ideas, finer research tools, better research and a better Chapter, more people involved... We just have to reach the critical mass to snowball, and we need everyone's contribution to get it done!

With personal regards,

Stefan Grösser
Student Chapter Representative

Matteo Pedercini
President

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1. Review of the PhD Colloquium at Nijmegen, the Netherlands

The 7th PhD Colloquium took place on 28th of July. Eight students presented their work in plenary sessions which were followed by half-hour workshops to discuss the raised issues and problems in more detail. The poster session, in which ten PhD students presented their current state of research, started directly after the plenary sessions. Yaman Barlas concluded the Students presentations with his interesting speech about validity, quality and improvement of System Dynamics Models. Approximately 70 people attended the colloquium and many were actively engaged in discussions. The two pictures express the spirit during the PhD colloquium.



In this section, we also want to congratulate the winners of the Dana Meadows Award. The award is given annually for the best paper by a student presented at the annual System Dynamics Conference. This year Özge Karanfil (McGill University) won the award with the interesting contribution "A Dynamic Simulator for the Management of Disorders of the Body Water Metabolism". Our congratulations go also to Jeroen Struben, Burcu Tan, H. Willem Geert Phaff, Jill H. Slinger, C. Els van Daalen, and Burak Güneralp who obtained honorable mentions.

2. The New Student Chapter Council

The last event on the colloquium day was the election of the Student Chapter Council and the organizers of the next PhD Colloquium. Stefan Grösser (University of St. Gallen and University of Berne, both Switzerland) and Chintan Vaishnav (MIT, Cambridge, USA) volunteered to organize the 8th PhD Colloquium next year. Furthermore, Stefan Grösser was elected as Chapter Representative and Matteo Pedercini (University of Bergen, Norway) was elected for the President of the Student Chapter. Ines Winz (University of Auckland, New Zealand) volunteered as webmaster for the Chapter website. Andrea Bassi (University of Bergen, Norway) volunteered to help with this. In the following, you find brief profiles of the persons in the policy council.

Matteo Pedercini: President of the Chapter

I am a PhD student at the University of Bergen (Norway). My PhD research focuses on the application of SD to economic growth issues, with a particular emphasis on developing countries' economies. At the same time, I work as a SD modeler at the Millennium Institute (since 2002) and build national socio-economic-environmental models for development planning. In my free time, I help Stefan in making the Student Chapter move on.

Stefan N. Grösser:**Chapter Representative and Organizer of the next PhD Colloquium**

I am a PhD student at the University of St. Gallen and work also as a research associate at the University of Berne (both Switzerland). I utilize SD to model the diffusion processes of socio-economical innovations. Besides teaching SD at the University of St. Gallen, I enjoy observing dynamical systems in the real world, e.g. dancing Tango or practicing Martial Arts in my leisure time.

Chintan Vaishnav: Organizer of the next PhD Colloquium

I am a PhD student in the Engineering Systems Division at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). I am currently trying to model the dynamics of technology, regulation and the industry structure in the communications sector. I enjoy classical music and yoga. I plan to hold the Boston end of the PhD Colloquium for the next year.

Ines Winz: Webmaster (primary)

Hi, I am a PhD student in Auckland, New Zealand. Originally from Germany, I have been living in down under for four years. My PhD project looks at using SD modeling to improve policy making in sustainable urban stormwater management - a big problem in Auckland, as sometimes we just have too much water. Other than that, I'll become a mum soon and that is very exciting (and frightening at the same time).

Andrea Bassi: Webmaster (secondary)

I have just completed the Master programme in System Dynamics offered by the University of Bergen and I am planning to enter the PhD programme in SD in the near future. My research focuses on energy, especially on the energy transition beyond oil. I work as SD modeler at the Millennium Institute indicating that I am also interested in national development planning. About my free time... Well, what is free time??? ☺

3. Goals and Activities of the Student Chapter for the Year 06-07

During the conference at Nijmegen, the Student Chapter policy council sets several goals for the upcoming year. The main objective is to facilitate a wider and better communication between Chapter members as well

as between Society Chapters. From this, the policy council formulated the following goals:

First, the website will be redesigned to become more user-friendly and informative for students of System Dynamics. Second, a quarterly newsletter will be institutionalized, and third, a web-based communication system for students and members of the Student Chapter will be established. The last objective is long-term oriented and will be considered in the first half of the year 2007.

4. Two Communication Means of the Student Chapter

In order to achieve the aforementioned objective of the Student Chapter, it is necessary to better utilize two media: the official Student Chapter website, and a quarterly issued newsletter.

The website has been redesigned, updated and contains information that aims to help students gather relevant information about other students using System Dynamics. This is to encourage finding students who do similar work so that they can learn from each other. Therefore, the website contains a list of the members of the Student Chapter including their fields of research and a current contact address. The website shall be seen as an information hub that interconnects several, up to now, unrelated researchers in the field of SD.

One additional word about the member list: the council agreed that the member list also contains a student alumni section. Students who completed their PhD will remain members of the list for three additional years. Thereafter, their entry will be deleted. Please make sure that your contact details are up to date so that other people interested in your work can find you.

The second new instrument is a quarterly issued newsletter. It will contain useful and timely information about the development of the Student Chapter and the progress of its members. As you can see, this first newsletter lays out the objectives and activities of the chapter. Further newsletters will contain stories about successful student projects, graduations of students, and current developments in System Dynamics of particular interest to students. I appreciate your constructive comments about the format and content of the newsletters and consider them in future issues if possible. Your personal contribution with recent publications in the field of SD, or about your graduation and PhD thesis is especially important, because it is not feasible for me or the policy council to obtain the knowledge by internet research. I can only provide the means - you are at large responsible for the content. Everybody can contribute on a personal basis to foster the development of the Student Chapter and the SD Society as a whole.

5. Conclusion Is Simply - Your Feedback is Required!

I want to phrase it crystal clear: your feedback is needed in order to achieve the mentioned goals. Therefore, please provide feedback about the following points:

1. Website in general
2. Student member list on the website
3. Structure and content of future newsletters

Ad 1.

I encourage you to provide feedback about the new structure, graphical appearance and the content of the website. Do you miss some information on the website that is of use for most of the Chapter members? If yes, then get in contact and write an email to me (stefan.groesser@unisg.ch) or directly to Ines (i.winz@auckland.ac.nz)

Ad 2.

Please give also feedback about the member list on the Student Chapter website (www.sdstudentchapter.org). If you do not want to be a member of the list, then please send an email to Ines directly (i.winz@auckland.ac.nz). If you want to be a member of the list, please send Ines information about your PhD project, especially suitable keywords, title of your work and your year of PhD study.

Ad 3.

The structure of the newsletter is that it will contain news about the Student Chapter and its members, stories about successful utilization of SD in research and applications done by students, and information about recently achieved PhD graduations. Is something of interest missing in this structure of the newsletter? Your support for the upcoming newsletters is needed.

With Best Regards,

Chapter Representative
Stefan

and the Policy Council Team
Matteo, Chintan, Ines, Andrea