

**International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering**

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President's message

Dear colleagues and friends,

As the world continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected each and every one of us in more ways than one. Please do monitor your own health closely and wear a face mask when you go outside.



The "ISSMGE Virtual University" that I proposed back in September 2017 is finally taking shape (see Fig. 1). The Virtual University consists of three essential components—online courses, library and publisher. Due to the serious threat of COVID-19, many universities and training centres worldwide are currently closed. A large number of students and engineers may not be able to access and receive the necessary education and training, which could affect their future significantly. It is very timely for the ISSMGE Virtual University offers a free alternative while they are staying at home or undergoing quarantine. Thanks to the hard work of Professor Mounir Bouassida and others, we have developed the following seven full courses:

- Course 1: Risk Mitigation, Monitoring & Observational Methods
- Course 2: In Situ Testing
- Course 3: Earthquake Engineering
- Course 4: Foundations
- Course 5: Soil Characterisation
- Course 6: Geo-engineering Education
- Course 7: Unsaturated Soil Mechanics

In addition, we have made available many webinars. You can visit the ISSMGE website to find out more: <http://virtualuniversity.issmge.org/>. Please let others in your country/region know about our free courses and webinars so that they may also benefit.

President's message (Con't)

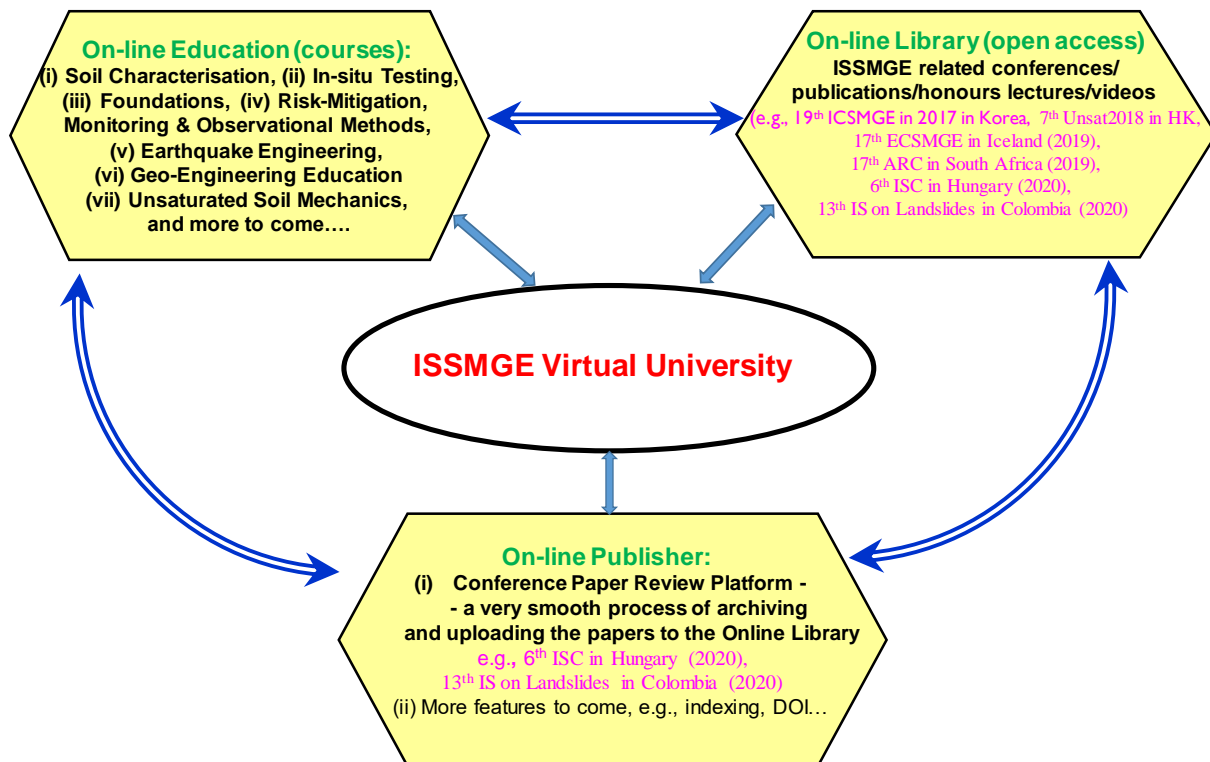


Figure 1. Education, Innovation and Diversity for a modernised ISSMGE

The open access policy initiated by the immediate past President, Professor Roger Frank, during his presidential term, has been continued and rapidly expanded. Naturally, the open access materials form part of the “ISSMGE library”. For example, the library has collected the proceedings of the 19th ICSMGE held in Seoul in September 2017 and the 7th International Conference on Unsaturated Soils held at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in August 2018. Please visit the following link for more information: <https://www.issmge.org/publications/online-library>.

Under the innovative leadership of Professors Dimitrios Zekkos and Kok Kwang Phoon, the Innovations and Development Committee has been exploring and developing our own “ISSMGE virtual publisher” platform, on which any conference organiser can review, accept and publish conference papers online.

Under the excellent leadership of Messrs Sukumar Pathmanandavel and Peter Day, co-chairs of the Corporate Associates Presidential Group (CAPG), many workshops and forums have been organized in regional conferences such as the 17th African Regional Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (SMGE), the 16th Pan-American Conference on SMGE, the 16th Asian Regional Conference on SMGE and the 17th European Conference on SMGE, with the goal of narrowing the gap between academics and practitioners so that they may find a common understanding and take collective action.

As I cannot emphasize enough, young members are our hope and future. I am delighted to report you that more than 20 young members have received the Bright Spark award since the creation of the lecture series of the same name by myself about one and a half years ago. For more details including the list of award recipients, please visit <https://www.issmge.org/the-society/awards/bright-spark-lecture-award>. I would like to thank Ms Lucy Wu, chair of Young Member Presidential Group (YMPG), and her team for assisting me in organising, identifying and selecting the finalists so that I can make the final decision efficiently.

Please take care, and God bless you all.