

INTRODUCTION

TO THREE SPECIAL ISSUES OF PAPERS FROM THE

AIChE Centennial Celebration

**“History never looks like history
when you are living through it.”**

— John W. Gardner

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Marking where chemical engineering education emerges in history is a challenge. Perhaps it should be traced to the growing practice of industrial chemistry courses during the 19th century. Some would cite the formation of the first degree program in the field at MIT in 1888. Doubtless, the formation of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers in 1908 marked a significant milestone in the rapidly developing profession of chemical engineering. During the Institute's 2008 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, we celebrated the centennial anniversary of AIChE's role in chemical engineering and in the education of chemical engineers.

As part of the Centennial Celebration, the Group 4 (Education) Programming Committee of AIChE sponsored a Topical Conference entitled “Chemical Engineering Education: Past and Future.” The theme was a “retrospective look forward” at many topics that form the chemical engineering curricula. Highlights included: “200 Years of Chemical Engineering Pedagogy: Reflecting on the Past, Designing the Future”; a comprehensive history of the ASEE ChE Division Summer Schools for Chemical Engineering Faculty; sessions on core areas of chemical engineering featuring some of the most prominent people in their fields; a joint education session with the Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers; and a full program of traditional education sessions. In an effort to further disseminate and preserve the collected knowledge, experience, and advice offered in the Centennial education sessions, extended abstracts were requested of all presenters. These abstracts are

available in the Proceedings published by AIChE and on the *CEE* Web site, <<http://cee.che.ufl.edu>>.

While the planning for the Topical Conference was ongoing, another significant education initiative was under way in AIChE. In an effort to expand the role of chemical engineering education in AIChE, an Education Division was formed with probationary status. The Education Division seeks to provide resources faculty need to teach well; promote the scholarship of engineering education; and provide an opportunity for all of those interested in chemical engineering education to become involved in a meaningful way to shape the practice of chemical engineering education. In addition to continuing to provide an innovative and useful technical program, current Division projects include: a partnership with the Chemical Engineering Division of ASEE for a special session on “Fundamental Research in Education”; an annual multi-national survey on how chemical engineering courses are taught; and an expanded sequence of career development workshops targeted at new and prospective faculty.

It seems natural that the Education Division would partner with *Chemical Engineering Education*. Authors submitting extended abstracts to the AIChE Proceedings were invited to submit an article to *CEE*. These papers went through the normal, rigorous *CEE* peer-review process. This issue is the first of three featuring these papers. We hope to forge closer links between AIChE's Education Division and *CEE*, and expect to see additional special issues of *CEE* based on AIChE Education Division programming in the future. □