



# From the President



JIE HAN

## The Paths We Take

I am Jie Han, and it's both a privilege and an honor to serve as your G-I president for the 2023-2024 term. My journey that led me to this position has been nothing short of remarkable since arriving in the U.S. in 1993. Initially, my goals focused around earning a Ph.D., publishing papers in prestigious international journals, and authoring an English-language textbook. That took me until 2015, but I've finally achieved those original career ambitions. Leading the G-I never entered my head until recently.

Looking back at my childhood, I realize that some things I experienced while growing up were pivotal in preparing me for a career in geotechnical engineering. Catching fish and eels in creeks and crop fields, capturing crabs in coastal mud, and scaling rocky mountains in search of wild fruits started me down a path that unwittingly equipped me with a natural affinity for the field. I discovered that clay mud was soft, that my small dams could stop water flow but were susceptible to erosion and collapse, that eel and crab burrows were round and inherently stable, and that, while rocks can be strong and unyielding, they can also fracture and potentially move.

My educational path started out similar to many others by obtaining undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D. degrees in geotechnical engineering. For four years, I worked as a design engineer and eventually manager of technology development for Tensar Earth Technologies, Inc. (now Tensar International) in Atlanta, Ga. I hold this industrial experience in high regard because it provided me with invaluable insights into the practical needs of real projects, the development of practical solutions, and their connection with the geotechnical engineering industry. I then transitioned to academia as an assistant professor of civil engineering at Widener University in Chester, Pa. Three years later, I accepted an appointment as an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan., where today I'm the Roy A. Roberts University Distinguished Professor.

My path with ASCE began as a Ph.D. student when I attended seminars organized by the local ASCE geotechnical engineering committee in Atlanta. Attending the Settlement '94 conference at Texas A&M was an important milestone for me, because it's where

I met and personally interacted with renowned geotechnical engineering professors and engineers, who previously I'd known of as just names I'd seen as authors of papers, textbooks, or class notes. My first opportunity to deliver an invited lecture was in 1999 at the ASCE/PennDOT Geotechnical Seminar in Hershey, Pa. Over the years, my involvement in G-I activities deepened, especially following my appointment as a faculty member at Widener in 2001 and later at KU. I actively participated in the Delaware Valley G-I activities, assumed a committee role within the Kansas City G-I Chapter, and guided many students who engaged in the Geo-Challenges competitions for 15 years. I've also served as technical chair and proceedings editor for the Geotechnical Frontiers conference in 2011, and as chair of the G-I Soil Improvement Committee from 2017 to 2021. These roles uniquely prepared me to address the responsibilities and challenges that the G-I Board encounters, first as a governor, and now as president.

Since joining the G-I Board in October 2020, I've been fortunate to be part of several important initiatives developed since then. I consider myself fortunate to inherit a Board characterized by strength, transparency, diversity, and responsibility, and I take immense pride in assuming the role of president for this exceptional organization.

Before outlining my priorities for the 2023-2024 G-I Board, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to outgoing Past President Bob Gilbert for his outstanding leadership, and to departing Governor Domniki Asimaki for her years of dedicated service and contributions to the Board. I'm eager to continue working with Immediate Past President Sissy Nikolaou, Vice President Helen Robinson, Treasurer Susan E. Burns, Governors Stan R. Boyle, Joe Manous, Jr., and Anand J. Puppala, and the dedicated staff team led by Board Secretary and G-I Director Brad Keelor. Finally, I welcome the fresh perspectives, energy, and enthusiasm that Jared Green, our new governor, will bring to the Board.

Attracting,  
nurturing,  
and retaining  
talent is  
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### Where's the G-I Headed?

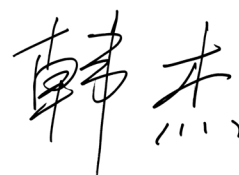
Thanks to the exceptional dedication of past G-I leaders, the unwavering commitment of our G-I staff, and the invaluable voluntary contributions of our G-I members, our institution stands in an admirable position. Nevertheless, we recognize that opportunities for further enhancement and progress remain. Following discussions among the Board members, I'm pleased to briefly outline the following four key priorities for the year 2023-24:

1. *Innovation:* We aim to foster a culture of innovation within the G-I, by timely recognizing our members' innovative work through harnessing the power of creative thinking and cutting-edge approaches to drive progress and develop pioneering solutions in the field of geotechnical engineering.
2. *Workforce Development and Retention:* Attracting, nurturing, and

retaining talent is paramount to long-term growth of our profession. We will concentrate on initiatives designed to actively engage students and young members in technical committee and local Chapter activities, foster closer ties between universities and industry to address rapidly evolving requirements, and offer an expanded array of educational resources aimed at benefiting and inspiring the next generation of geotechnical engineers.

3. *Appreciation of Voluntary Service:* Recognizing the invaluable contributions of our members who volunteer their time and expertise is essential. We'll actively acknowledge and appreciate their service, fostering a sense of pride and belonging within our community.
4. *International Involvement:* As we continue to expand our global reach, we'll support our members to actively engage with and play leadership roles in the international geotechnical engineering community. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing across borders, we aim to enrich the global impact of the G-I.

Life, including our professional journey, often unfolds in unexpected ways that don't always align with our initial dreams or plans. It's through our involvement and experiences that we develop interests, passions, and responsibilities that shape our path. By addressing the priorities I've listed above, we can ensure the continued growth and success of the G-I. I eagerly look forward to collaborating with each of you to propel our institution and profession forward. 



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