This year’s Annual Investigators Meeting was held November 2-4, in Buffalo, New York. Over 70 MCEER investigators, committee members, partners, University at Buffalo officials, students and staff members attended the event at the University Inn and Conference Center.

The meeting began Thursday, with a luncheon and closed session for members of the Student Leadership Council (SLC). SLC members discussed a variety of issues (see related article on page 5), and selected A. Natali Sigaher as chair and Mettupalayam Sivaselvan as vice-chair, both of the University at Buffalo. The session was followed by an Icebreaker reception Thursday evening.

MCEER Director George Lee opened Friday morning’s session by welcoming everyone to Buffalo and introducing the University at Buffalo’s newly appointed Vice President of Research, Dr. Jaylan Turkkan. Dr. Turkkan spoke briefly on her commitment to guiding basic science and engineering research into real world applications. She also related her personal experiences following the recent Marmara, Turkey earthquake, where she has friends and family.

Dr. Lee then provided an overview of the EERC NSF Year 3 evaluation of MCEER and guidelines for renewal in Year 4. Overall, the Year 3 evaluation was positive and the review team cited MCEER’s integration of social sciences with engineering, and application of advanced technologies to earthquake hazard mitigation as particular strengths of the Center.

The requirements of the Year 4 proposal effort and highlights of the strategic plan were discussed in detail by MCEER Deputy Director Michel Bruneau. Program leaders then presented overviews of projects currently underway in their respective areas. Speakers were:

- Masanobu Shinozuka and Thomas O’Rourke, Program 1: Seismic Evaluation and Retrofit of Lifeline Networks
- Michel Bruneau, Program 2: Seismic Retrofit of Hospitals
- Kathleen Tierney, Program 3: Earthquake Response and Recovery
- Andrei Reinhorn, Program 4: User Networks for Seismic Assessment and Rehabilitation of Critical Facilities
- Andrea Dargush, Program 5: Education and Educational Outreach

Following lunch, MCEER’s Donald Goralski made a presentation on the Center’s numerous Industry/User Collaborations, and discussed its Strategic Partnerships Network in some detail. Several industry partners took part in the meeting.

Barbara McManus, MCEER computer specialist, demonstrated a new web-based reporting system for investigators. The remainder of the day on Friday was dedicated to breakout sessions for participants in each program area.

Saturday featured a return to the program and cross-program area breakout sessions for most of the day. The meeting concluded with reports from the program coordinators on action items and/or outstanding issues, and remarks from standing committees and partnership representatives.

Any comments or suggestions concerning the bulletin are welcome! To do so, write the Editor at jestoyle@acsu.buffalo.edu.