SYRIAN AMERICAN
ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

SAEA Historical Review & Strategic Direction

Board of Directors Update

Quarterly Membership Conference - Fall 2024

Introduction

- Historical Overview
- Introduction to SAEA Mission & Vision.
- SAEA’s role in supporting Syrian American engineers through professional development and knowledge sharing.



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Session #1

SAEA's Historical Overview

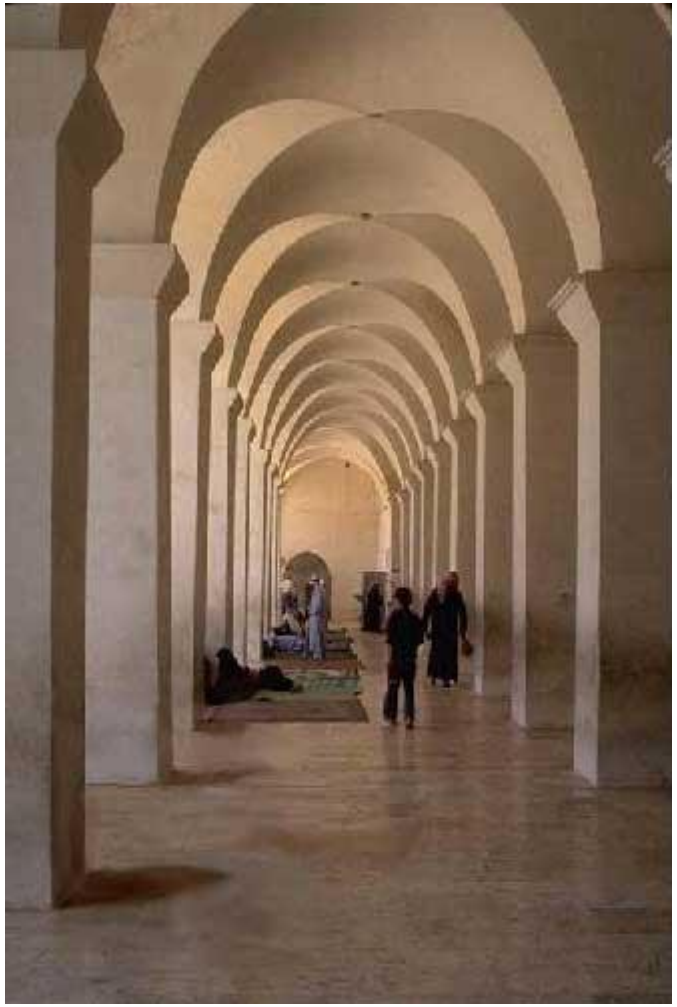
2012 to 2022: the first 10 years……

The 10th anniversary – Revisit SAEA's projects & accomplishments since 2012.

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Session #2

SAEA’s Vision & Mission



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SAEA’s Vision

Vision Statement:
Members organized under SAEA will generate a positive impact and reflection on the engineering community and make a difference in developing Syrian cities, systems, and infrastructure to advance Syria into a productive and proud member of the global community of nations.



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SAEA’s Mission

Mission Statement:

SAEA is dedicated to supporting and improving the skills and abilities of Syrian American engineers, advancing their knowledge and increasing their value to family, community, and profession.



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Focus on Professional Development

- **Goal:** Develop the skills of engineers through continuous education.
- **Approach:** Webinars, workshops, networking, and mentorship.
- **Concerns**: SAEA board of directors continues to refrain from formal participation in relief and refugee projects. This policy applies consistently to both governmental and non-governmental organizations, whether based in the U.S. or abroad



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SAEA's Commitment to Syria

- Although no direct relief work is undertaken, SAEA contributes to Syria's recovery through technical education, knowledge sharing, and professional training.

- Organizations such as SAMS and SRD in the U.S., along with engineering and governmental assemblies in Syria and Turkey, are involved in numerous beneficial projects aimed at serving Syrian citizens. SAEA has been and remains available to offer technical consultation in line with the expertise and capacity of its volunteer members.

- However, SAEA cannot assume the extended costs, liabilities, communications, or coordination associated with projects outside the U.S. As a professional technical association,



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SAEA’s Commitment to Syria

- SAEA does not engage directly in relief and rescue initiatives of any kind.
- SAEA focused vision and mission were adopted in 2020 following extensive strategic planning by our leadership.
- SAEA's strategic objectives and initiatives have been regularly communicated at each of our four annual conferences since 2021.
- The guiding principles and core values outlined on www.SAEA-US.org continue to inform BoD decisions guide the members and projects we undertake.



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Historical Context of SAEA's Focus

SAEA decision not engage in support relief and rescue projects follows over a decade of involvement in various initiatives, during which we conducted thorough evaluations and held extensive discussions among our members regarding the outcomes and impacts of our efforts



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SAEA's Focus on Sustainable Contributions

- **#1 Lack of Appreciation**:
- Previous participation in relief efforts did not receive adequate recognition or support from managing organizations.
- Despite our significant experience, time, and effort, we consistently encountered disappointing reactions, regardless of the size or nature of the requesting organization.
- This above is true over the full spectrum of projects see earlier



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SAEA's Focus on Sustainable Contributions

- **#2 Resource Intensive**:
- Relief projects require
  - significant time,
  - coordination, and
  - Negotiations
  - On-site presence
  - Significant funding,
- SAEA, as a volunteer-based technical professional organization, cannot provide.
- Successful execution of such projects typically requires dedicated professionals with full-time commitments to manage the complexities of bureaucratic processes and documentation essential for tracking work and costs in crisis and conflict zones.



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SAEA's Focus on Sustainable Contributions

- **#3 Limited Funding**:
- SAEA does not have the capacity to secure or offer the substantial financial resources required for large-scale relief projects.

- Large-scale infrastructure initiatives, such as highways, bridges, water treatment facilities, transportation systems, schools, and hospitals, demand significant financial resources that only governments can provide.

- While these projects align with SAEA's mission and expertise, they rely entirely on government budgets and require extensive coordination with stakeholders.



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SAEA's Focus on Sustainable Contributions

- **#4 Avoiding Political and Religious Affiliations**:

- Many relief efforts necessitate partnerships with politically or religiously affiliated organizations, which contradicts SAEA's commitment to neutrality.

- Engaging in such initiatives would divert SAEA from its core mission and compromise its non-religious and non-political stance.



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Misalignment with Relief Project Needs



Funding Over Technical Expertise:

- Many relief projects prioritize financial aid over technical support, making SAEA’s expertise less relevant in certain cases.

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Misalignment with Relief Project Needs

American Standards Not Always Applicable:

- SAEA members are trained in American codes and construction standards, which may not directly apply to the specific conditions in Syria or the Middle East.



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Misalignment with Relief Project Needs

Mismatch in Expectations:

- Relief efforts often require localized solutions that don’t align with the high-level, specialized skills that SAEA members bring.



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Misalignment with Relief Project Needs

Limited Impact Without Funding:

- While technical consultation is valuable, many relief projects need substantial financial backing, which SAEA cannot provide without direct involvement in fundraising.



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Importance of Neutrality

Love of the Homeland

- Many SAEA members deeply love their homeland and maintain homes and assets in Syria, where their family and loved ones reside.
- They hope to see Syria united and safe, allowing them to travel freely and spend time with their loved ones without restrictions.



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Importance of Neutrality

Love of the Homeland

- Their pride in being Syrian American fosters a strong sense of love and respect for both nations and their respective laws and regulations
- Relief work routinely requires collaboration with politically or religiously affiliated organizations but SAEA maintains neutrality, serving all Syrian citizens without bias.



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In Summary…. Challenges of Relief Involvement

- **Time and Resource Demands**:
- Relief projects require significant commitments, which SAEA cannot support.
- **Complexity:**
- Bureaucratic processes and on-site coordination are beyond the scope of a volunteer-based organization.
- **Large-scale projects need substantial funding**,
- which only governments or large organizations can provide.
- **SAEA is a non-profit**,
- volunteer-driven association, with limited financial and human resources.
- **Focus on technical expertise**:
- SAEA provides consultation, not financial support, which relief projects heavily rely on.
- **Relief efforts demand full-time management**,
- which SAEA cannot offer as a professional development organization.
- **Staying aligned with core mission**:
- SAEA prioritizes career advancement over large-scale project involvement.

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SAEA’s Strategic Focus

- **Objective:** Focus on enhancing member education and professional skills to foster long-term impact.
- **Approach:** Offer resources and platforms that support career growth.



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SAEA Annual Conferences

- **Annual Events**: Opportunities to connect with industry experts, attend technical sessions, and grow professionally.
  - 2 online
  - 2 onsite
- **Regional Networking**: Local and online events foster collaboration and exchange of ideas within regional communities.
  - Chicago
  - Dallas



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Early Career Support

- **Workshops**: Designed to help young engineers transition from education to professional practice.
- **Mentorship**: Guidance on career paths, job search strategies, and skill development.

Summer 2023 Conference Agenda

Saturday, August 12th 2023 Online via Zoom

12:00 PM to 2:00 PM EST (GMT -4)

12:00 PM EST	**Welcome & Introduction**
Session #1	**Can We Stop Climate Change & Slow the Spread of Natural Disasters** *Hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, floods, sea levels, extreme temperatures. Are current carbon reduction rules sufficient to stem temperature rise and rising sea levels?* ***Presented by: Eng. Yaman Alshash*** ***MS Environmental Engineering, University of Windsor***
Session #2	**Landing your Next Job: A Realistic Strategy to Avoid Mistakes & Learning from Them** *It is not easy to find a satisfying job in engineering. Learn techniques for applying to new jobs, interviewing, presenting, and landing a job that aligns well with your career goals to help your next move.* ***Presented by: Eng. Mohamad Miro*** ***MS Mechanical Engineering, Lockheed Martin***
Session #3	**Unlock Your Potential with Small Daily Achievements That Will Make You Happier!** *Discover the power of positive thinking and how to create actionable steps that will lead you to success in all areas of your life, from health and wealth to relationships and more.* ***Presented by Eng. Hassan Alshekha*** ***MS Telecommunication at Verizon & book author***
Session #4	**From Syria to Harvard: A Refugees' Journey into the Cloud of Cyber Security** *A spirited SAEA member story. As an asylee, the speaker climbed the ladder in the US from a gas station attendant to a Harvard graduate. How SAEA provided leadership and guidance to support his development early on into a cloud engineer.* ***Presented by Eng. Osama Blkassem*** ***MS IT & Management – Cloud Technical Manager at Accenture***
	SAEA Fall Conference Planning

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Early Career Support





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Early Career Support





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Supporting Women in Engineering

- **Balancing Career and Family**: Tailored programs to support female engineers in navigating work-life challenges.
- **Career Development**: Resources to help women advance professionally in the engineering field.

Winter 2024 Conference Agenda

Saturday, February 24th 2024 Online via Zoom

12:00 PM to 2:00 PM EST (GMT -4)

12:00 PM EST	**Welcome & Introduction**
Session #1	**From Temporary to Permanent** **A Study to Resettle Syrian Refugees** *An innovative Master thesis research in the field of Architecture presenting creative strategies to economically transform temporary camps to permanent communities for millions of internally displaced.* ***Presented by: Arch. Dima Almeniawi*** ***MS Architectural Engineering, University of Cincinnati***
Session #2	**Professional Engineer License & Certification – Is it Worth the Hassle?** *Having completed an MS degree in Civil & Construction Engineering and another MS in Sustainability. Later obtained a PE license and a certification in Envision. An evaluation of the return on the investment from a Female engineer perspective.* ***Presented by: Eng. Bushra Asfare*** ***MS Civil Engineering, NYC Dept of Environmental Protection***
Session #3	**What is Artificial Intelligence & What to Expect from Generative AI** *Developing generative artificial intelligence (AI) products requires deep knowledge and understanding of software engineering. We explore the future of this field and the career potential in it.* ***Presented by Eng. Reem Abdulrazzak*** ***BS Software Engineering & Software Engineer at LexisNexis***
Session #4	**Domestic Semiconductors Manufacturing for Economic & National Security of the US** *Congress passed a sweeping bill for investment in manufacturing research, and design to fortify the economy and national security to reinforce the US chip supply chain and reduce dependence on Chinese and Korean suppliers.* ***Presented by Eng. Lama Kadoura*** ***PhD Candidate Electrical Engineers – Wayne State University***

Supporting Women in Engineering





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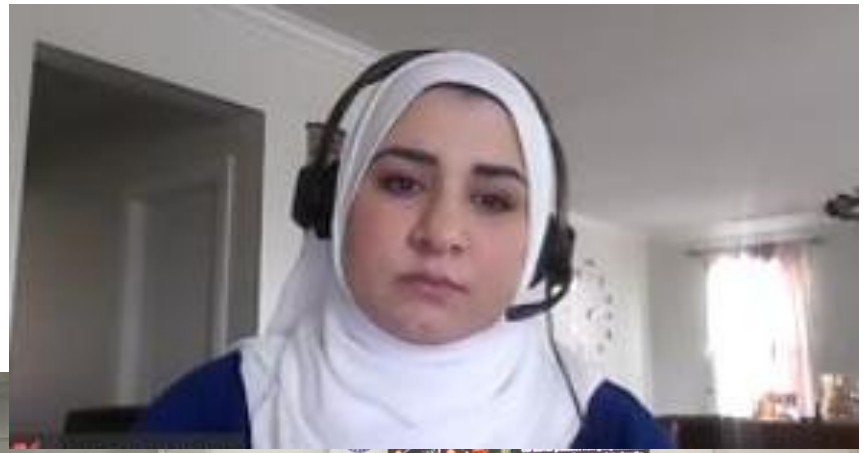
Supporting Women in Engineering

Professional Engineering and Certification: Is It Worth the Hassle?

Female Engineer Perspective

Bushra Asfare, P.E., ENV SP

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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Healthcare Facilities Management

- **Healthcare Initiative**: a comprehensive model charter for a Healthcare Facilities Management Committee available for use by any member of the Syrian diaspora upon request
- **Committee Resources** : Proposed a team of engineering and technical members to support this model charter with a carefully selected some of the top talent in engineering fields critical to large-scale facilities management for this initiative

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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Earthquake Response Task Force



- **Committee Resources** : SAEA has formed an earthquake response task force comprised of
  - 17 members,
  - led by 6 specialized civil and structural engineers with over 180 years of combined experience in the analysis, design, and construction of reinforced concrete buildings.
  - 11 members bring additional decades of expertise in electrical, mechanical, IT, and environmental engineering.

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Earthquake Response Task Force

- **Damage Assessment**: Evaluating structural damage in earthquake-affected areas.
- **Seismic Retrofitting**: Providing expertise on strengthening buildings against future earthquakes.
- **Training Local Engineers**: Educating Syrian engineers in seismic design and retrofitting techniques.

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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Earthquake Response Task Force: SAEA FORM PA_EQ1

SAEA FORM PA-EQ01 BASED ON ACI 133 GUIDELINES Building ID _____ رقم البناء

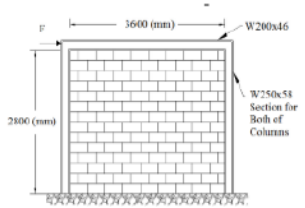
ملخص تقييم بناء / منشأة

تاريخ المعاينة:	
مدينة:	**إحداثيات الموقع:**
العنوان بالتفصيل:	
اسم صاحب البناء:	**فريق الكشف :**
نوع إشغال البناء: سكني / تجاري / صناعي/----------	**عدد الطوابق للبناء الطابقي:**
نوع البناء :بناء طابقي / دار عربي	**الإكساء** :كامل / جزئي / بدون إكساء
وضع العناصر الإنشائية:	
وضع العناصر غير الإنشائية:	
حالة المنشأة من حيث الأمان: ☐ لا يوجد أضرار- آمن ☐ أضرار خفيفة-آمن ☐ أضرار متوسطة ☐ أضرار شديدة ☐ إنهيار كامل	
التوصية النهائية: ☐ إخلاء المنشأة ☐ تدعيم العناصر الإنشائية ☐ تدعيم الجدران ☐ توصيات أخرى يرجى تحديدها: ----------	

Name and signature: **الاسم والتوقيع:**

SAEA FORM PA-EQ01 BASED ON ACI 133 GUIDELINES Building ID _____ رقم البناء

Building Information معلومات عن البناء

Date	تاريخ المعاينة
Team	فريق الكشف
GPS Coordinates	إحداثيات الموقع
Number of stories	عدد الطوابق
Date of construction	تاريخ الإنشاء
Structural system	وصف الجملة الإنشائية
Typical RC column dimensions	أبعاد الأعمدة الخرسانية
Typical RC wall dimensions	ابعاد الجدران الخرسانية
Infill Wall Type (brick or concrete) 	نوع جدران الحشو غير الحمالة (طوب أو خرسانة)
Infill/ masonry thickness	سماكة جدار الحشو
Estimated maximum P/A (based on unit weight of 1000 kgf/m² and maximum observed tributary area)	تقدير الحمولة القصوى المطبقة فعلياً على المتر المربع للبلاطة بدون الوزن الذاتي 1000كغ/م²

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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Earthquake Response Task Force

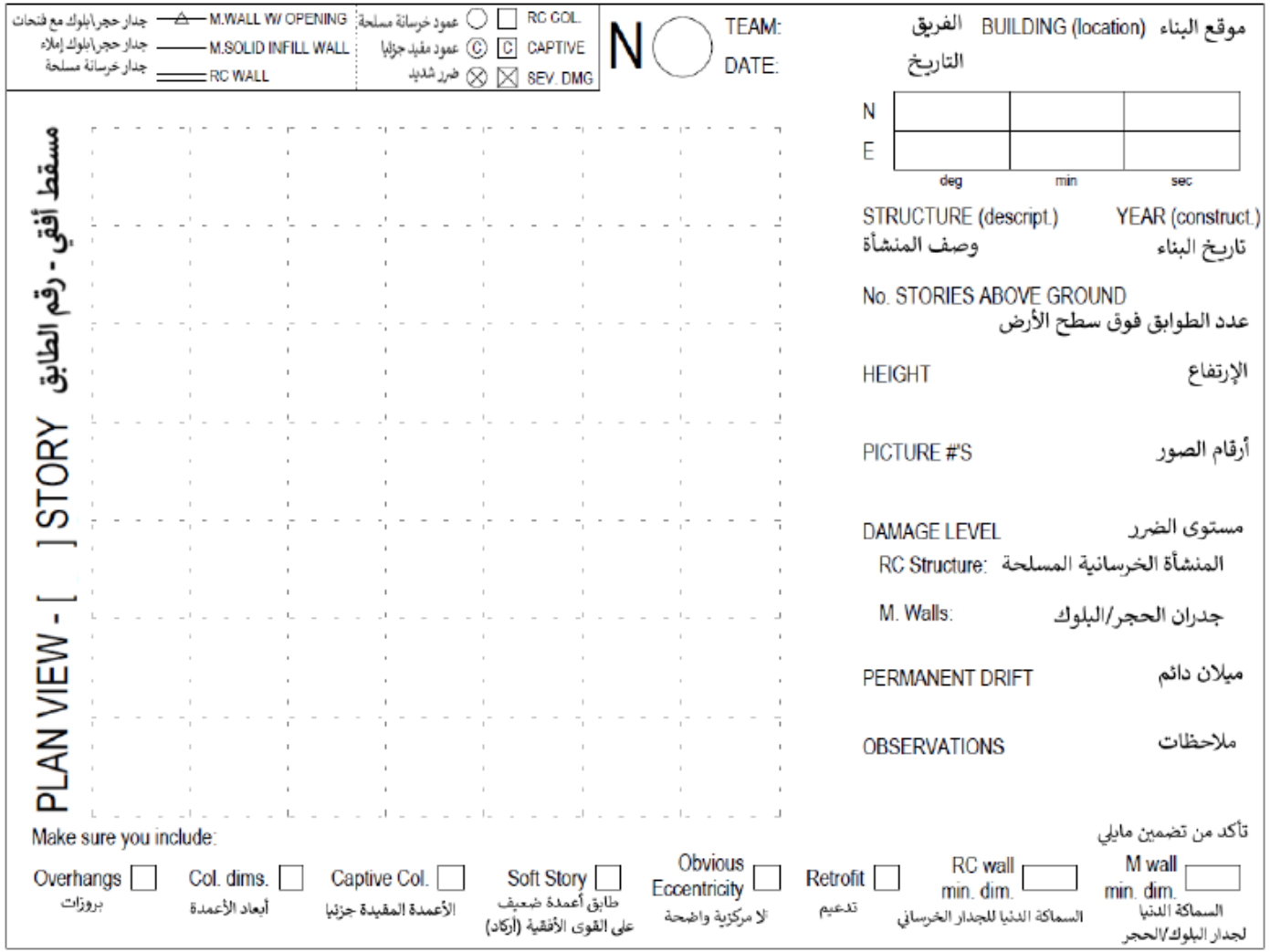
Damage Scale **مقياس الضرر**

		RC Structure	منشأة خرسانية مسلحة	Masonry Walls	جدران بلوك\حجر
None	لا يوجد				
Light	خفيف	Hairline inclined cracks and/or flexural cracks	تشققات شعيرية مائلة أو تشققات على العزم	Hairline cracks. Flaking of plaster	تشققات شعيرية. تقشر الطينة الإسمنتية
Moderate	متوسط	Spalling	تشظي	Cracks in walls and joints between panels. Flaking of large pieces of plaster	تشققات في الجدران والفواصل بين القواطع (ألواح). تقشر مساحات كبيرة من الطينة الإسمنتية
Severe	شديد	Local structural failures	إنهيار عنصر إنشائي محدد (موضعي)	Wide and through-cracks in walls and joints between panels	تشققات عريضة ونافذة (عميقة) في الجدران والفواصل بين الألواح
Collapse	إنهيار كامل				

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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Earthquake Response Task Force



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Supporting Syrian Organizations

Earthquake Response Task Force

- **Earthquake Initiative**:
- The scale of recovery required was immense, necessitating significant budgets and manpower.
- Unfortunately, much of the repair work was carried out by organizations with substantially larger resources.
- Work did not comply with international quality standards for seismic hazard mitigation, despite SAEA's provision of technical guidance.
- Ultimately politics and other biases prevailed in the little work done.

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SAEA's Vision Implemented…

1. SAEA aims to strengthen pride in being Syrian through the achievements of its members in the U.S. and around the world.

2. We believe that even small successes can create a positive impact that elevates Syria.

3. A stable, secure, and thriving individual can share their wealth of knowledge with anyone seeking it, whether from Syria or elsewhere.

4. Members are encouraged to assist their homeland in their personal capacity, regardless of whether they seek formal support from the association.



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SAEA's Vision Implemented…

We kindly ask SAEA members to uphold the vision and principles of the association by:

1. refraining from making any political, racist, sexist, or religious remarks on any of SAEA's platforms.

2. Members are encouraged to share engineering-related topics that benefit others in a respectful manner, reflecting the identity and values of SAEA and its members.

3. The Board of Directors will enforce respect for all individuals, regardless of race, religion, or political beliefs, and will dismiss any member who does not adhere to these guidelines.



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Session #3

SAEA’s Key Programs and Initiatives

Focus on continuing education, mentorship, scholarships, and professional growth opportunities.



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Technical Contributions to Syria

- Translation of engineering standards and codes.
- Webinars in Arabic for Syrian engineers.
- Technical consultation services.
- Task forces for specialized projects

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Networking Opportunities



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Networking Opportunities



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Networking Opportunities



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Networking Opportunities



Educational Resources

Webinars and Workshops:

Continuous education for members in various disciplines.

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***Spring Conference*: Saturday, May 11th, 2024**

Holiday Inn Express – Farmington Hills
21100 Haggerty Rd, Northville, MI 48167

Navigating Retirement Financial Planning & Investment Strategies with Confidence

Guest Speakers:

Mr. Abed Khirfan
Financial Advisor, President & CEO, Khirfan Financial

Mr. Ali Fayad
Wealth Management Advisor, Senior VP
Merrill Lynch



SAEA Educational Resources

- **Licensure Support**: Assistance with PE, SE, and FE exam preparation through study resources and discounts.



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Educational Resources

- **Mentorship Programs**: Members get personalized career guidance from experienced professionals.

DR. SHADI BANITAAN
Associate Professor of Computer Science, University of Detroit





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Keynote Speaker Announced for 10th Anniversary Celebration

by admin | Oct 1, 2022 | News, Projects | 0 comments



SAEA is pleased to announce the keynote speaker for our upcoming tenth-anniversary celebration October 15th 2022 in the Detroit area:

Topic: Future of Engineering & Education

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Mohamad S. Qatu, Dean of College of Engineering – Michigan University

Dr. Qatu has spent more than 26 years in the industry and academia since his Ph.D. in 1989. He spent 13 years in the industry (mostly at Ford Motor C His academic experience includes professorship in mechanical engineering Mississippi State University and being director of the School of Engineering Technology at Central Michigan University.

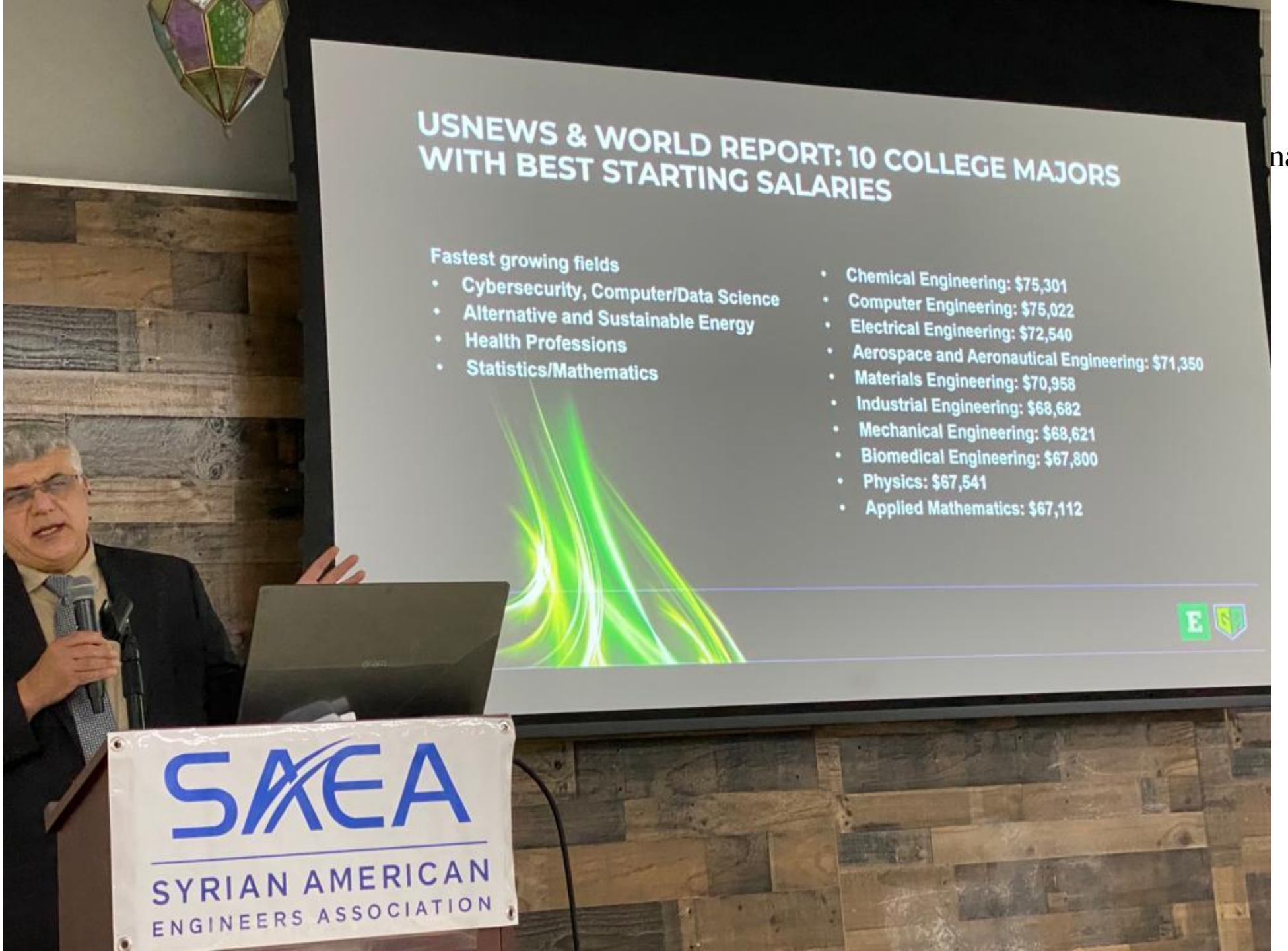
Professor Mohamad Qatu is passionate about the use of mechanics to solv engineering design problems, particularly in the areas of automotive engine composites and vibrations.

Author of four books, Dr. Qatu has published more than 100 articles, most of which are in refereed journals. He is the chief of the International Journal of Vehicle Noise and Vibration and on the editorial board of Composite Structures, Jo Vibration and Control and Journal of Passenger Cars. He delivered more than ten keynote presentations at leading co

As a well-renowned Arab-American Engineer and scholar, SAEA is thrilled to welcome him and share in his expertise a unique perspective at our upcoming event.



nals.



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Scholarships and Grants

- **Scholarship Program**: Financial assistance for students and young engineers pursuing their education.
- **SAEA Innovation Award**: Recognizing outstanding contributions in engineering and innovation.



Technical Contributions to Syria

- **Training Programs**: Offering educational resources in Arabic to support Syrian engineers.
- **Translation and Consultation**: Translations of engineering standards and technical consulting for Syria’s rebuilding efforts.

SAEA Convenes with FEMA, ACI, ASCE Representatives

by admin | Feb 8, 2023 | News, Projects | 0 comments

SAEA members who work at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Concrete Institute (ACI), an member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) combined and reviewed all the relevant standards from the three organizations pertaining to the damage survey and condition assessment of reinforced concrete and masonry structures. The task force objective is to develop a comprehensive data gathering and visual assessment form to record observations and document the structural conditions after the earthquake. The form is intended for inspection teams with limited resources and planned to be translated from English to Arabic to facilitate implementation by inspection teams from Turkey and Syria

SAEA's Commitment to Syria

- Although no direct relief work is undertaken, SAEA contributes to Syria's recovery through technical education, knowledge sharing, and professional training.

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Home About Us Our Work

Reckless Water Use Effect on Syria

by admin | Mar 25, 2023 | News, Projects | 0 comments



Since its founding "Clean Water for Every Syrian" has been a driving strategic initiative and a staple in every strategic plan cycle. For many years, access to clean water in regions of Syria has been an ongoing crisis. The UN has recently reported generally on the need to ensure all people have access to clean water and sanitation by 2030, as demand for water and water shortage both continue to increase.

SAEA's Global Impact

- Contribution to the global engineering community through education, training, and professional development.
- Indirectly supporting Syria's recovery efforts through knowledge transfer and technical training.

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Home About Us Our Work

Keynote Speaker Confirmed for Spring Conference (DEI & Management Transition)

by admin | May 7, 2023 | News, Projects | 0 comments



SAEA Board looks forward to welcoming members to the Spring Membership Conference on Saturday May 13th in the Detroit Metro Area.

The Keynote speaker is confirmed and members are very excited to listen and learn from Dr. El Gamal's depth of knowledge and expertise as a business leader in the US Engineering community and GLWA.

Dima El-Gamal, Ph.D., PE, LEED AP, is the Capital Improvement Planning Director at the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). At GLWA she is responsible for planning ~$350 Million of water and wastewater infrastructure improvements on an annual basis.

We are thrilled to learn on important topics of workplace diversity, equity and inclusion as well as making the transition from engineer into engineering management from the lens of a female business leader and a notable Syrian-American Engineer.

We hope to see you at our Spring conference to welcome this highly regarded speaker.

DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) IN THE WORKPLACE

Dima S. EL-Gamal, PE, PhD, LEED@AP

Director of Capital Improvement Planning, Great Lakes Water Authority

May 13, 2023


Inequality
Unequal access to opportunities
Equity
Equality?
Evenly distributed tools and assistance
Justice
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SAEA SPRING CONFERENCE 2023
DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)
IN THE WORKPLACE
Dima S. EL-Gamal, PE, PhD, LEED@AP
Director of Capital Improvement Planning, Great Lakes Water Authority
May 13, 2023
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TRANSITION INTO MANAGEMENT*

**FROM THE LENS OF A PROFESSIONAL PRACTICING MUSLIM FEMALE*

Dima S. EL-Gamal, PE, PhD, LEED@AP

Director of Capital Improvement Planning, Great Lakes Water Authority

May 13, 2023


DEI IN THE WORKPLACE
Understand the Concepts
Model Behaviors
Engage in Discussions
Be the Change*
*do not dismiss or assimilate
change
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ROLE OF ENGINEERING TEAMS

Climate Change and Natural Disasters

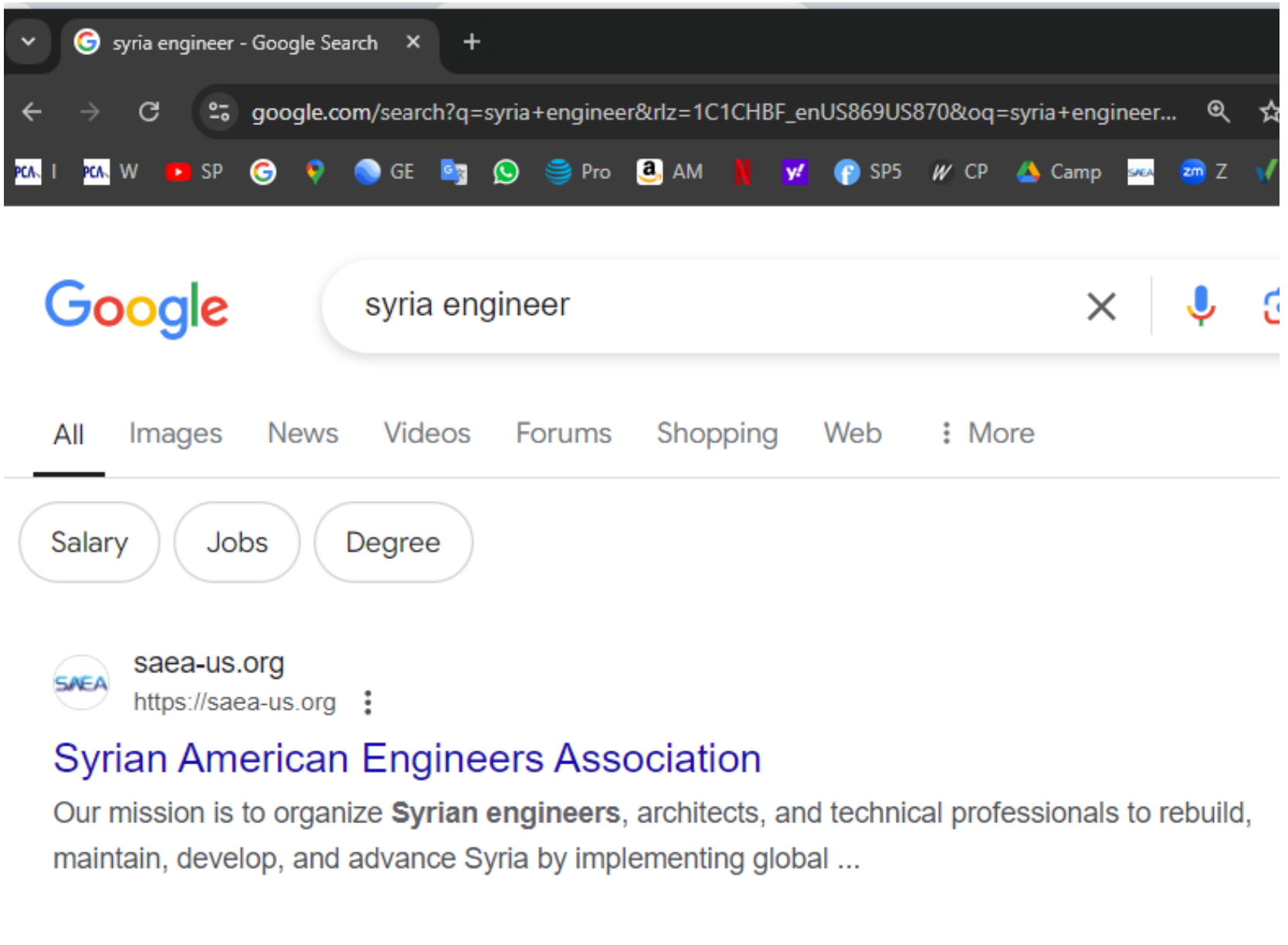
ABDULLAH E. IBRAHEEM



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Conclusion – SAEA's Long-Term Vision

SAEA's decision to refocus on professional development aligns with its mission. The organization continues to contribute to both its members' career growth and development ensuring a lasting impact on the global engineering community and any Syria's rebuilding and development efforts.



Session #4

Open Forum + Q&A

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Upcoming Membership Conference

Online – January 17th 2025