

GREATER HUNTSVILLE SECTION CHAIR VISITS MOBILE

Section Chair Ken Philippart visited Mobile on April 22nd and 23rd to meet with the Greater Huntsville Section's Mobile area members.

On April 22nd, Mr. Philippart visited the University of South Alabama (USA) to meet the fledgling student branch's faculty advisor Professor Carlos Montalvo, and the USA Chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department, Professor Dave Nelson. Ken thanked Carlos and Dave for supporting the creation of USA's student branch and discussed ways the university could promote AIAA membership and arrange activities.

Carlos had next arranged for Ken to speak with the student members. Ken welcomed the 20 students to AIAA and the Greater Huntsville Section and presented an overview briefing. He introduced the students to the organization of AIAA and Greater Huntsville as well as the types of activities the Section has been conducting. The wide variety of activities quickly helped the students develop their own ideas for local activities. A discussion afterwards centered around how the student branch could get started on planning activities, including soliciting corporate support, working with other technical societies and promoting branch membership. The students asked about opportunities for internships and employment, including in the Huntsville area. Ken relayed contact information on several of these issues. The USA student members left the meeting with renewed enthusiasm and a better sense of how to organize their branch and activities. Inspired by the discussions, the students completed the branch Bylaws and submitted them for review that same evening, the final documentation required for the USA Student Branch charter application.

The next day, Mr. Philippart had lunch with Ms. Courtney Kronenberger and Mr. Bob Coke, the acting leadership of Greater Huntsville Section's Mobile Chapter, established last fall. Courtney and Bob discussed their membership recruiting efforts and their activity with respect to securing corporate sponsorship. They discussed the challenges of starting up a new organization and their strategy for addressing these challenges. Ken discussed programs and strategies that the Greater Huntsville Section has been using successfully to reinvigorate AIAA membership and discussed ways that the section leadership and general membership could help our Mobile brethren. One idea that was discussed was for the Mobile Chapter to partner with the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park to refurbish the museum's Redstone missile that had been damaged during Hurricane Katrina. The section became aware of this need thanks to Pre-College Outreach Director Megan Beattie's initiative. This potential project will be researched further, including the possibility of involving the USA Student Branch in the restoration and perhaps, members traveling from Huntsville to assist.

The trip to Mobile was a success. It was particularly rewarding to meet the Mobile leaders and students who are extending AIAA's presence and influence into south Alabama. Thanks Carlos, Courtney and Bob for all of your hard work. Our future in south Alabama is bright indeed!