

Launch a Members in Transition Initiative in your Section

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The workforce in oil and gas industry is being impacted in 2020 by two black swan events – low oil prices and COVID-19. Are you an SPE member who wants to help other SPE members who have lost their jobs, but you don't know where to start? Are you in job search mode yourself? Consider launching a Members in Transition (MiT) initiative in your section.

Members in Transition

The SPE MiT initiative was piloted and developed in the SPE Gulf Coast Section in the Greater Houston area in 2015. In 2015, several of the past section chairs assembled a group of volunteers to develop a program for members who were going through a career transition such as layoff, early retirement, furlough or reduced work opportunities. The initiative includes several programs, since we have a large section, but you can select what works best for your section. We documented the initiative in a paper that was presented at ATCE2017 as SPE-187205-MS “Members in Transition: Career Planning, Job Search, Entrepreneurship and Innovation”. [Download it from OnePetro](#) for free. Our committee's website with a collection of resources to provide guidance to job seekers is [here](#).

Local Knowledge

The foundation of the MiT initiative is a monthly seminar series. It's usually held on the second Friday of each month in the SPE Gulf Coast Section, with exceptions for holiday, room scheduling conflicts and occasionally, a hurricane. We usually have three speakers at every half-day seminar, covering a variety of topics including job search, career planning, entrepreneurship, areas of job growth, soft skills and innovation. ***The SPE MiT initiative works best when deployed in an SPE section where you can access speakers with local knowledge from local universities and community colleges, faith communities, government and state agencies, career experts and employers.*** We start each seminar by asking all the job seekers to introduce themselves using their elevator speech. As job seekers get to know each other, they can refer each other to jobs in their area of expertise when they come across an opportunity during their own job search. The networking that takes place in the room during the coffee breaks is often as useful as the content in the presentations, so we are all hopeful that we'll be able to resume face to face meetings soon after the COVID-19 lockdown ends. You're welcome to attend the SPE Gulf Coast Section webinars virtually, and when you host your own local meetings, please invite us to join you as well.

Discount Meeting Prices

The SPE Gulf Coast Section Board authorized all of their study groups and committees to offer special discounted prices for MiT/Student/Retirees in the section for most events. We want to encourage all the SPE members who are searching for employment to attend SPE meetings frequently, because the best way to network is to go to meetings where there are people who have jobs. A percentage (~20%) of the seats for each event is allocated for this special discounted price. During COVID-19, many of these section meetings have moved to virtual format, but the quality of the content and the speakers is the same.

Hiring Event

The SPE Gulf Coast Section also pioneered the *Upstream Oil and Gas Professionals Hiring Event* as part of the MiT initiative. The next hiring event is scheduled for Sept. 29, 2020, and it will be the seventh in the series that we've scheduled every 6 months. We postponed the hiring event originally scheduled for March 2020 due to COVID-19, but thirteen of the employers already registered carried over their registration to the Sept event. We collaborate with more than 20 professional societies for engineers and geoscientists in the Houston area to hold the event, allowing our planning team access to a broad group of employers and job seekers. The Gulf Coast Section also maintains a job board, which may not be practical in smaller sections. The *Upstream Oil and Gas Professionals Hiring Event* typically attracts 20 employers and 250-500 job seekers.

Job Search Work Teams

We've also held weekly *Job Search Work Team* meetings. These are groups of 20 job seekers or less, who meet weekly to report on the metrics of their job search, to keep each other accountable and to support each other. Similar services offered by several faith-based groups in the Greater Houston are well established, so we generally guide job seekers to these resources.

Computer software

Early in the MiT initiative, we were approached by a software vendor who offered to provide free licenses to job seekers while they were in transition. To coordinate a similar program, if feasible, and to provide training if needed, your section will need to coordinate with local software vendors. Often software vendors are willing to offer unused seats in their public training classes to members in transition, and job seekers get real benefit from this opportunity.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

We started the *Ideas Launch Pad* to scout start-ups for the Houston Technology Center. These efforts are now being coordinated by [Innovate](#) committee in SPE Gulf Coast Section, the Startup Village at ATCE, and UPitch at URTeC and ACE. The Innovate team vision is to foster an

environment that promotes innovation in the oil and gas industry by advancing knowledge and enabling collaboration between entrepreneurs, investors, and organizations.

Network virtually

Are you ready to get started? Begin by guiding your MiT community in your section to enhance their professional network. How can a job seeker improve their network? During quarantine, start virtually! SPE offers several online opportunities: Connect communities, e-mentoring, Technical Sections, OnePetro, and SPE Webinars. Volunteer in an SPE committee. Reach out to SPE colleagues to request references and endorsements.

Questions?

If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me through the SPE Membership Directory or social media.