Editorial

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This special issue of Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering includes 14 papers that expand technical contributions presented at the 46th US Rock Mechanics/Geomechanics Symposium, which took place in Chicago on June 22–28, 2012. The focus of the Symposium was on new and exciting advances in rock mechanics and geomechanics and it encompassed all aspects of rock mechanics, rock engineering and geomechanics.

The presentations at the meeting were grouped into four tracks: petroleum, mining, civil, and interdisciplinary. Interestingly the majority of the sessions were truly multidisciplinary, with presentations and participation of professionals from different industries. This follows a trend observed in the last American Rock Mechanics Association (ARMA) symposia where problems, and many times approaches taken and solutions proposed, cut across disciplines.

The range of topics covered was very broad, including “classical problems” such as rock mass characterization or

stability and support of caverns and tunnels, to name a few, to more recent challenges such as carbon sequestration or geothermal energy, which are the result of the greater involvement of rock mechanics/geomechanics in addressing new societal demands for water, energy, and sustainability.

The Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering special issue includes a representative sample of the contributions made at the Symposium. All the contributions went through a thorough review process. First, all the papers were selected by the Organizing Committee of the 46th US Rock Mechanics Symposium based on their quality and as examples of key topics presented at the conference. Second, all the papers were expanded, rewritten and re-reviewed for the special issue. Finally, the papers were uploaded into the Journal’s Editorial Manager System for publication, after acceptance by the Editor of the special issue.

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