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Editorial

Pan American Congress of Applied Mechanics (PACAM VII)

The seventh Pan American Congress of Applied Mechanics (PACAM VII) was held in the Campus Integrado Andrés Bello of the Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco, in Chile in January 2002. The organizing and editorial committees accepted 167 four-page abstracts, from 25 countries, which were published in the congress proceedings entitled "Applied Mechanics in the Americas".

Following the congress, 37 papers were selected by session chairs and the scientific committee of the congress, based on the short-paper versions and the oral presentation. The authors of these papers were invited to submit full-length papers to be published in the International Journal of Solids and Structures. This special issue contains 17 papers, all of which were peer reviewed.

Pan American Congresses of Applied Mechanics are sponsored by the American Academy of Mechanics and the congresses are held every two years, always in a Latin American venue. The previous congresses were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1989; Valparaíso, Chile in 1991; São Paulo, Brazil in 1993; Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1995; San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1997; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1999. The next Pan American Congress (PACAM VIII) will take place at the University of Havana, Cuba in January 2004. The aims of these congresses are: (1) to expose mature engineers and scientists, including graduate students, to new research findings, techniques and problems, and (2) to provide opportunities for personal interactions between mechanicians of North and South America, as well as other continents, through formal lectures and informal conversations. Originally, the congresses attracted researchers and scientists mainly from the Americas. However, in the most recent congresses the participation of researchers from all over the world are welcome to attend these meetings.

The editorial committee would like to thank all the authors for their contributions, all the reviewers who assisted us in the review process to assure the high scientific level of published papers, and finally Professor Charles Steele, the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Solids and Structures who agreed to dedicate this special issue to PACAM VII.

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