

2018 Leadership Conference Recap

By Amanda L. Blyth

The 2018 Leadership Conference started on a high note, as AIST's executive director Ronald Ashburn told attendees, "It's an exciting time to be working in the steel industry. When we reflect upon this era, it will be recognized for remarkable innovation and growth."

This declaration came during Ashburn's opening remarks at the AIST Leadership Conference, which was held 5–7 November 2018 in New Orleans, La., USA. The Leadership Conference serves as an annual gathering of officers from AIST's Member Chapters and Technology Committees to steer AIST's programming and activities.

In his opening presentation, Ashburn provided the attendees with an overview of the global steel industry. He discussed global steel growth — which, for 2018, was estimated to be up 3.9%; production and capacity in the U.S. and China; market segments such as construction, oil and gas, and automotive, noting that sales of more steel-intensive light trucks and sport utility vehicles have increased; and considerations related to the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the U.S. midterm elections (which took place that day) and the Chinese economy.



State of the Association

Ashburn also gave an update on the state of the Association. He highlighted a few key statistics from AIST's 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. The high-water mark for AIST membership was set in 2015 at 17,782 members (5,504 students and 12,278 professionals). At the end of 2017, membership stood at 17,483 and is trending toward a new record in early 2019. According to the Strategic Plan, AIST membership is targeted to reach 20,000 by the end of 2022.

He also highlighted the geographic mix of AIST's membership, which in 2008 was 89.5% NAFTA and 10.5% non-NAFTA. At the end of 2017, the non-NAFTA portion grew to 16.1%. The goal by the end of 2022 is to grow this segment to 25%, which is more reflective of the global



outreach expected from our members and their companies.

Ashburn then reviewed programming, highlighting the success of the Road Shows and the broad reach of AIST's International Study Tours. In addition, he laid out the benefits of AIST's Technology Training programs, which are cost-effective programs taught by industry experts that are geared toward specific technical aspects of steel manufacturing.

The presentation switched gears to focus on the AIST Foundation and its programs. A critical factor in the sustained success of not only AIST but the steel industry at large is its next generation of workers. Ashburn discussed in detail the programs of the AIST Foundation, the immense generosity of its donors, and an overview of the Foundation's scholarship and grants.

A new feature of the AIST Foundation scholarships is that each one comes with a guaranteed internship. Since 2005, a total of 178 students have completed internships through the AIST Foundation at 89 companies. If there were any doubt about the effectiveness of these internships, consider the fact that 61.4% of AIST interns are now employed in the steel industry.

Economy Considerations

Following Ashburn's presentation, Chris Kuehl, managing director of Armada Corporate Intelligence, gave an overview of the manufacturing economy.

Kuehl touched on a several timely issues, such as the U.S. midterm elections, tax cuts, tariffs and trade. He gave interesting perspectives on what lies ahead in terms of geopolitics, innovation and the "changing

of the guard," as he noted that 10,000 Baby Boomers are retiring every day — as well as the fact that there has been a decline in manufacturing jobs since 2007.

Strategic Planning

Lloyd Corder, president and chief executive officer of CorCom Inc., then led an "Air It Out" session. This discussion allowed attendees to bring up issues that matter them as they relate to AIST programs, membership and events. Those issues were then grouped into four themes — AIST in China, Women in Steel, Technology in Steel and Careers in Steel. The attendees split up into groups to discuss these four themes and brainstorm ideas and action items.

T.C. Graham Prize

With the strategic planning and brainstorming portion of the day complete, the program shifted gears once more. The 2018 T.C. Graham Prize recipient, Julie Champion, was invited to the stage to



AIST president James Dudek (left) and AIST executive director Ronald Ashburn (right) presented the 2018 T.C. Graham Prize to Julie Champion (center).



Robert Smith of CISDI shared some insights during a group discussion.



Gretchen Haggerty, retired, United States Steel Corporation, was interviewed during the Leadership Perspectives session.

discuss her team's winning proposal: "Nanotexturing to Make Bactericidal Stainless Steel for Food/ Beverage, Health Care and Consumer Products Industries."

Champion, associate professor, and Dennis Hess, professor and Thomas C. DeLoach Jr. Chair at Georgia Tech's School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, received the US\$20,000 prize for creating nanotexture on stainless steel through electrochemical etching. This treatment decreases the attachment of bacteria to steel and kills bacteria while simultaneously improving corrosion resistance. Adding

this nanotexture to stainless steel food and beverage equipment, biomedical devices and a variety of other surfaces to prevent bacteria infection could have a wide application. For more information on the 2018 T.C. Graham Prize, see pages 86–87.

Leadership Perspectives

Closing out the programming on Tuesday was the Leadership Perspectives session, which featured a conversation with Gretchen Haggerty, retired executive vice president and chief financial officer for United States Steel Corporation.

Haggerty fielded questions from Ashburn about all aspects of her career and her experiences being

Amy Beard of Quaker Chemical Corp. shared her team's perspectives from the strategic planning session.



talent (and its different forms) and the understanding that minor missteps can get blown out of proportion (especially on social media).

A reception closed out the day, providing attendees the opportunity to mingle with Julie Champion and Gretchen Haggerty before heading out to enjoy dinner in the Big Easy.

Southwest and Birmingham Member Chapters

While the Leadership Conference was taking place, another AIST event was being held right next door: the annual meeting of AIST's Southwest and Birmingham Member Chapters. The Member Chapter portion of the week kicked off the morning of Monday, 5 November, with a golf outing at the nearby Bayou Oaks at City Park.

On Tuesday, attendees of the annual meeting listened to presentations on a wide variety of topics, and on Wednesday, they had the opportunity to tour Nucor Steel Louisiana LLC.

For more details on the Southwest and Birmingham Member Chapter annual meeting, see pages 204–205.

Forward Thinking

On Wednesday, 6 November, the Leadership Conference reconvened with a talk by futurist Frank Diana of Tata Consultancy Services. Diana gave a high-level, fascinating look at what the future could look like in his presentation, titled “Reimagining the Future: A Journey Through the Looking Glass.”

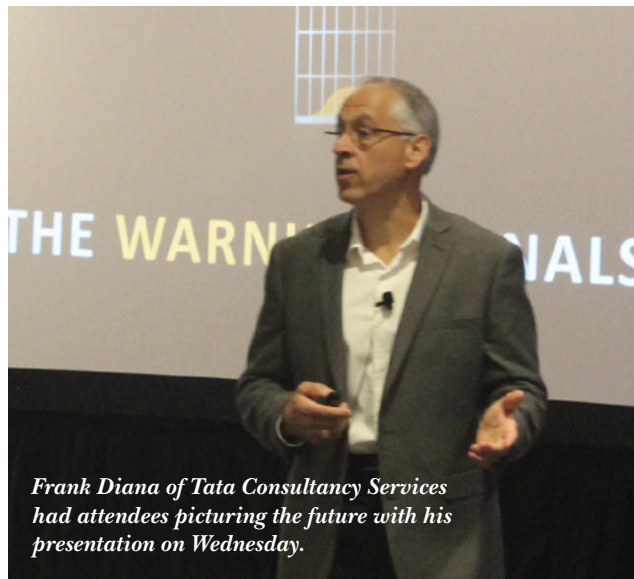
He talked about the tipping points in human evolution that fundamentally changed society and how people live and work, noting that we are standing on the brink of the fourth Industrial Revolution — possibly the most transformative ever. He broke down the aspects of communications, agriculture, health care, clothing, travel, work and education that would change with this revolution. The drivers of this next revolution will be the internet, big data, social media and the like.

In an example, Diana asked what would happen if autonomous vehicles replaced all vehicle operators and the concept of vehicle ownership. What would the implications be? How would it affect the environment? What safety measures would have to be in place? What would happen to municipal revenue streams?

the first female officer at U. S. Steel. She offered insight into how men and women are supported and promoted differently in the workplace, adding that it's not something that will change overnight.

She was asked what the steel industry can be doing better. Haggerty cited capital efficiency, developing long-term strategies for dealing with climate change, and making the right investments.

Having been involved in every major capital move and acquisition at U. S. Steel since the time she was 24 years old, Haggerty understands the importance of working with a team of good people. She shared some of the qualities she admires in a good leader: integrity, ethics, being a good listener, recognizing



Frank Diana of Tata Consultancy Services had attendees picturing the future with his presentation on Wednesday.



In a world where machines do the work of humans, Diana posited what will matter most will be those things that can't be automated, such as ethics or empathy.

Breakout Sessions

Following the morning session, the Leadership Conference attendees divided into breakout sessions for Member Chapters and Technology Committees to engage in open discussions.

The Technology Committees session opened with a discussion on the AIST International Study Tour program, its benefits to the AIST membership through international exposure, and the considerations necessary to execute a successful tour. The committee representatives were then invited to share information about their respective committees: their successes, unique events, award programs, joint meetings, as well as issues or concerns that they are experiencing. A few common items emerged, such

as the growing prevalence of committees engaging in the study tour program, ideas to increase producer participation and the importance of training for employees.

The Member Chapter representatives held a similar discussion, also talking about issues and successes. Producer engagement is a large concern for this group as well, in addition to promoting chapter events. Dialogue centered around the importance of members serving in officer positions for the chapters to maintain and evolve active regional programming for AIST. There was also focus on ways to increase student engagement and exposure to the industry as well as to encourage chapter efforts to promote AIST at schools and campuses within their region. The group reviewed

the numerous funding options available to the chapters to support outreach events.

Wrapping Up

The groups assembled for AIST Jeopardy in the afternoon, for which AIST vice president Ronald O'Malley served as judge. Following the game, Ron Ashburn provided a summary of the conference and the discussion items that had been prioritized by the attendees the previous day.

AIST wishes to thank the sponsors of the 2018 Leadership Conference:

