AIST YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Liz Hunter, cold mill metallurgist

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What first interested you about the steel industry?

Steel is a popular industry that people from my alma mater go into. Most of the industry players are involved in the Advanced Steel Products and Processing Research Center at Colorado School of Mines and most of my teaching assistants and professors were involved in that center. This resulted in ferrous metallurgy being something I was taught in my metallurgy classes and I enjoyed the subject matter more so than other types of metallurgy. I decided to try to get a co-op at a steel mill and see if I liked the industry and the work. I ended up working at SSAB Alabama for eight months and was hooked on the industry after that.

Describe the coursework and degrees that you have obtained.

I have a B.S. degree in metallurgical and materials engineering from Colorado School of Mines and an M.B.A. from University of California – Riverside. I received the Benjamin F. Fairless Scholarship through the AIST Foundation my senior year of undergrad and participated in Material Advantage.

What did you do as a student that enhanced your passion or understanding of the steel industry?

I attended several of the metallurgy department's "Free Pour Friday" events, where they open up the foundry to students school-wide and teach them how to do aluminum sand castings. Being in the foundry and getting my hands dirty and pouring molten metal fueled my desire to enter the metals industry. I was fortunate to have an outstanding mentor during my co-op at SSAB Americas, Justin Ward, who took me under his wing and taught me how to be a metallurgist that brings value to an organization. I then studied abroad in Australia at the University of Wollongong, where I had a chance to tour BlueScope's Port Kembla mill as well as a mill in Victoria. When I returned to Mines, ArcelorMittal flew our senior metallurgy class to Chicago, where we toured the Burns Harbor mill. Just having the opportunity to be in steel mills enhanced my passion greatly.

What advice do you have for students who are curious about the steel industry?

Check it out and see if it's for you. Look for an internship. Apply for an AIST scholarship, as many of them come with a paid internship. It's not your grandfather's steel industry — the technologies used and the applications of steel are broad and exciting.

What are your plans for continued involvement in AIST?

I am part of the Young Professionals (YP) Steering Committee, where a small group of us meet via conference calls once a month and generate ideas to implement more ways for YPs to be involved in AIST. I have also joined the Galvanizing Technology Committee to start building a network there and learning about galvanizing. I would love to find a way to be involved in the Foundation because I want to find a way to pay it forward through AIST. As a scholarship recipient, I have firsthand experience on how these scholarships can impact a life and I would like to be a part of helping to do that for the future generation of steelworkers. The proudest moment of my career was hearing that my intern last summer, Allyson Cameron, received the Premier Steel Intern Scholarship this year. ✦