

AIST Young Professionals



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What first interested you about learning more about the steel industry?

I first became interested in the steel industry during my university's introduction to engineering disciplines course. The class gave an overview of the different engineering degrees offered at the university. Metallurgical engineering and steelmaking specifically stuck out as areas of interest. I have an artistic background in vocal performance, and metallurgy and steelmaking, to me, is a wonderful combination of art and science. From that class, I attended an open foundry event sponsored by the Metallurgical Engineering Department, which further sparked my interest in steel. I later got to explore this interest with two internships in the steel industry. Both

internships gave me a good foundation in steel and solidified my interest in pursuing the industry after college.

Describe the coursework and degrees that you have obtained. Did you participate in any of AIST's programs or attend AIST events as a student?

I have a bachelor of science in metallurgical engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology. My coursework prepared me well for the steel industry and my current role. As a supplier for steel manufacturing, having a base knowledge in metallurgy gave me a great understanding as to why refractories are so important in steelmaking and how they affect the final products.

I was involved with Material Advantage in college, which partners with AIST and other material organizations. AIST was also highlighted by a few of the department professors who were members. Dr. Ron O'Malley, in particular, mentioned the benefits of AIST membership as an engineer in industry.

Have any AIST programs assisted with your career advancement?

I attended the Secondary Steelmaking Refractories — A Practical Training Seminar back in 2022, which is a training course put on by the Ladle & Secondary Refining and Refractory Systems Technology Committees. The course gives a great overview of the importance of refractories during secondary steelmaking. It balanced technical training with practical knowledge regarding refractories, process considerations and wear mechanisms. The course helped connect the relationship between refractories and steelmaking. The open discussion portions during the training also spotlighted common issues that were ongoing at steel producers and provided opportunities to explore potential solutions.

What has been the biggest benefit (or benefits) you've experienced being involved in AIST as a young professional?

AIST has many programs that have helped with my career development. AISTech is an event I look forward to every year. There are so many opportunities for learning and networking during the week, starting off with the Young Professionals networking event. It's always great to see my former classmates and meet new people. The steel industry is large, but it becomes smaller as you start to see some familiar faces. I also appreciate the joint mixer with the Women in Steel group. As a member of both groups, it is a great way to network



with peers. During the conference I enjoy attending the technical sessions because of the wide range of topics covered. It's great to learn about new technologies and processes both with steel and refractory. I also attend the Technology Committee meetings. The committees are great resources for learning about industry trends and collaborating on problems. AIST has so many programs and opportunities to continue learning about the steel industry!

Have you had any mentors that have assisted with your career development so far? If so, how did you identify them as a mentor, and what impact have they made thus far?

My mentors have come in a variety of forms, and I have had many. Some are formally defined like through the rotational development program at my company, and others have formed naturally through time. I believe that everyone you interact with presents an opportunity to learn something new. Some of the mentors I've had have primarily helped in a technical capacity, but I've also had a few that have helped me consider different career paths and navigate challenging situations. For me, a good mentor has two roles that they should fulfill:

advocate and challenger. They should advocate for you. They should also teach and encourage you to advocate for yourself. A mentor should also challenge you to help you grow and develop through your career.

I have also had the opportunity to act as a peer mentor for many incoming engineers. It is definitely an experience I would recommend. Peer mentoring not only helps the mentee, but it can also help give perspective to the mentor. Questions that I had early in my career that seemed challenging and scary became less stressful when discussing with my mentees. This really allowed me to reflect on how things can change and that some problems become easier with experience.

What advice do you have for students who are curious about pursuing something related to the steel industry?

Ask questions! The great power about being new to something is the ability to ask as many questions as possible. Even if the questions may seem simple, asking is always better than not asking at all. This was a piece of advice I was given when I first started in industry and while I tried to follow it, I'm sure there are plenty of other questions I could have asked.

What do you find unique and interesting about the steel industry? What do you enjoy the most about it?

The steel industry is historic but also ever evolving. For such a big industry, there is a constant push for development and improvement. While it is a technical industry, I enjoy the opportunities to get out in the field and watch steelmaking happen live. The steel industry is one of the most exciting industries to observe the process from start to finish. From melting to finishing, it is fascinating to watch the steps and see how much work and thought goes into creating all of these products. ♦

Are you a steel professional age 35 or younger?

Join the new AIST Young Professionals Membership Committee to expand your network and connect with peers.

For more information, visit AIST.org/membership or contact Lauren Veltre at +1.724.814.3082 or lveltre@aist.org.