



**MINUTES OF MEETING – FINAL
STEEL TO STUDENTS ROUNDTABLE
MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2026
PITTSBURGH, PA., USA**

Attendees:

Kelly Dallas (Chair), Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc.	Chloe Myers, Steel Dynamics Inc.
Lauren Adams, Michigan Tech	Mark Olson, Pacific Steel Group
Janeth Anguiano Garcia, Instituto Tecnologico de Morelia	Emily Pollock, Ellwood Group
Merajul Ansari, Carnegie Mellon University	Jesse Quiroga, EAFab
Ron Ashburn, AIST	Malavikha Rajivmoorthy, Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.
John Ball, AIST	Rafaela Rapalo, Carnegie Mellon University
Andrew Bissot, Metallus	Amelia Rezek, Michigan Tech
Dennis Black, Steel Dynamics Inc.	Sky Schultze, Virginia Tech
Lawrence Cho, Colorado School of Mines	Zach Sennetti, University of North Texas
Hilary Collins, AIST	Lori Siebenaller, Nucor Corporation
Emmanuel De Moor, Colorado School of Mines	Nathan Soltes, Case Western Reserve University
Joseph Dzierzawski, Primetals	John Speer, Colorado School of Mines
Chris Eder, Michigan Tech	Mackie Stankich, ArcelorMittal North America
Drew Fleming, Arkansas State University	Aydan Tseng, University of North Texas
Alexandra Glover, Michigan Tech	Denise Villanueva, Ellwood Group
Caden Grimmett, Arkansas State University	Stacy Varnecky, AIST
Benjamin Kowing, SSAB Americas	Cole Walker, CMC
Karin Lund, STEAM Rising	Emma Walter, EAFab
Luna Mancilla Guillermo, Instituto Tecnologico de Saltillo	Drew Warble, AIST
Josh Mueller, Michigan Tech	Courtney Young, AIST

1.0 CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Dallas called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Ms. Dallas thanked those attending.

2.0 ANTI-TRUST GUIDELINE REVIEW

Ms. Dallas reviewed the antitrust guidelines provided with the agenda.

3.0 ROUNDTABLE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

Ms. Dallas stated that the AIST Foundation Steel to Students Roundtable fosters communication between our university network and the steel industry. The objectives are to increase the number of faculty teaching steel-related curriculum and the number of students pursuing careers in the steel industry.

4.0 FACULTY GRANT RECIPIENT REPORT

Two AIST Foundation faculty grant recipients provided updates on previous projects and plans on how funding awarded in 2026 will be used to expand steel-related programs at Colorado School of Mines.

- **Emmanuel De Moor**, Professor, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering at Colorado School of Mines
2017 AIST Foundation Kent D. Peaslee Junior Faculty Award recipient.
- **Lawrence Cho**, Research Assistant Professor at Colorado School of Mines
2017 AIST Foundation Kent D. Peaslee Junior Faculty Award recipient.

Dr. Emmanuel De Moor provided an overview of the AIST Foundation support the school has received, including the three-year Kent D. Peaslee Junior Faculty Award. This support fits with hands-on teaching, plant tours, Steel Intern Scholarships and conference attendance for students. He also covered ASPPRC's industry-linked research and raised AI, enrollment trends and STEM interest as topics for discussion.

Dr. Lawrence Cho provided insight into his plans for his recent AIST Foundation Kent D. Peaslee Junior Faculty Award funding. His proposal combined metallurgical principles with computational tools in steel education and research. Over three years, he projects reaching 210 students through enhanced coursework, involving 20 students in research and senior design projects, and reaching 90 participants through student-led workshops and outreach. The work will engage about 30 steel companies. He plans to publish a public framework so other schools can adopt the approach. His earlier AIST work includes the 2023 Sustainable Technologies for Steel Manufacturing grant, which he held with Dr. De Moor.

5.0 STEEL INTERN SCHOLAR REPORTS

Four 2026 Steel Intern Scholarship recipients provided updates on their internship experience:

- Caden Grimmatt, Mechanical Engineering, Arkansas State University (Internship at U. S. Steel Tubular Operations)
- Luna Neriza Mancilla Guillermo, Materials Engineering, Instituto Tecnológico de Saltillo (Internship at Ternium)
- Zach Sennetti, Materials Science and Engineering, University of North Texas (Internship at Steel Dynamics Inc. – Southwest – Sinton Division)
- Nathan Soltes, Materials Science and Engineering, Case Western Reserve University (Internship at Y-12 National Security Complex)

6.0 WHAT STEEL EMPLOYERS NEED FROM UNIVERSITIES

Ms. Myers shared takeaways from two recent AIST Talent Acquisition sessions, *Attracting, Mentoring, and Retaining the Next Generation of Steel Professionals* and *Attracting Talent to Rural and Industrial Work Locations*, and translated industry feedback into practical actions for university

faculty. The central message was that building the future steel workforce requires strong connections between students, universities, and industry throughout the student-to-career pipeline, not just at graduation.

On attracting and retaining students, companies reported competing with other industries for talent and emphasized meaningful internship projects, mentorship and manager engagement, and converting successful interns into full-time hires. Ms. Myers further stressed the importance of maintaining internship programs and entry-level hiring commitments even during economic downturns. Pausing these opportunities for a year or more risks losing momentum in workforce development, weakening the industry's ability to compete for talent and making it difficult to rebuild those connections when market conditions improve. Consistent investment in emerging talent is essential to positioning steel as a stable, sustainable and attractive long-term career choice. Faculty can support these efforts by presenting internships as a pathway to a career rather than a summer job, and by helping students prepare, build industry relationships, and see how their academic background applies to steel.

On location, employers noted that students often rule out rural and industrial sites before understanding the career and community opportunities available. Introducing these options early through plant visits, industry speakers, and exposure to varied career paths was identified as an important strategy.

Recommended actions for universities included building industry relationships, promoting internships, scholarships and networking opportunities, exposing students to steel careers before their final year, helping students maximize their internship experiences, and broadening their perspectives on geographic location. The presentation closed with a call for continued collaboration between universities and steel companies to strengthen connections from the classroom to the internship, to the first full-time position.

7.0 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Ms. Collins provided an overview of AIST's Young Professionals (YP) programs, which began when the YP membership category was created in 2013. Since then, YP membership has grown from 500 members to more than 1,300.

AIST offers free first-year membership for those 30 and under, followed by discounted membership through age 30, subsidized by the AIST Foundation. Feedback from the first YP Roundtable in 2017 led to the development of a YP Steering Committee which helped drive the evolution of YP programming. The Board approved the YP Membership Committee as a standing committee in 2023, and it officially launched at AISTech 2024.

Current programs include the annual YP Board of Directors Mentor Mixer, Essential Skills Spring Webinar, YP development sessions at AISTech, and the Young Professionals and Student Mentor Program. The newest is the AIST Young Professionals Rising Star Award, which recognizes professionals 35 and under who actively support and promote young professionals in the industry, based on leadership and engagement rather than job title. Nominations are reviewed by the committee's Awards Subcommittee and remain active for two years.

8.0 BERNARD J. FEDAK FUND INITIATIVES

Mr. Warble provided an overview of the newly developed Bernard J. Fedak Professional Development Grants, which support continuing education and career development for professionals working in, or interested in pursuing, a career in the steel industry. Funded through the Bernard J. Fedak Project Management Excellence Fund, the grants help offset the cost of attending AIST's Project Management 101 or Project Management 201 Technology Training conferences. Each year, the AIST Foundation, in partnership with the AIST Project & Construction Management Technology Committee, will award three grants of up to US\$2,500 each, for a maximum of US\$7,500 annually.

Applicants must be employed by or have a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in project management at a steel-producing or steel-related company. Applications are due 31 December 2026. Grant funds are applied first to registration, with the remaining balance reimbursing eligible travel expenses after the recipient completes the training.

9.0 OPEN DISCUSSION

All attendees enjoyed lunch and were encouraged to discuss the following prompts.

- What is the biggest barrier keeping schools and universities from offering more steel-related courses or research?
- What would a "steel-ready" student look like, and how can employers help students get there?
- What resources can AIST provide to attract more students to the steel industry and increase retention of Young Professionals in full-time roles?

A [summary](#) of each group's feedback is submitted herein.

10.0 NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Dallas stated that the next meeting will be held on Monday, 3 May 2027, 11:30 a.m. –1:45 p.m. at AISTech 2027 in Nashville, Tenn., USA.

There being no further business, Ms. Dallas adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Courtney Young, AIST Board Services Administrator

The minutes have been electronically sent to the attendees of the UIRR for review, corrections, additions, and approval. Information contained in these minutes is pertinent to the AIST Foundation, Warrendale, Pennsylvania and is to be treated as confidential.