

Education and training

Helping today's students become tomorrow's leaders

William W Sorensen, executive director of the US-based Foundry Educational Foundation, looks back, and forward, to the organisation's aims and objectives.

During the economic boom period after World War II, the need for metal casting engineers increased dramatically to meet the demands of the burgeoning post-war manufacturing economy.

A collaboration of industry leaders, societies and post secondary schools launched the FEF - a US tax-exempt, non-profit charitable organisation to assure a steady supply of outstanding graduates in metal casting engineering. FEF established a 'key professor' at each accredited school so their FEF students were encouraged and mentored. Today, the foundation works with 25 FEF accredited and 11 FEF affiliated colleges and universities.

Getting things done

The FEF's mission is to strengthen the metal casting industry by supporting unique partnerships among students, educators and industry, helping today's students become tomorrow's leaders.

During its 60+ year lifespan, FEF has evolved to meet the needs of students, expanding in recent years to students in Canada and Mexico. The following initiatives are central to the FEF mission:

- Ensuring that college and university cast metal programmes deliver strong academic and practical components that are responsive to evolving industry needs through key professor positions;
- Accrediting college and university programmes that meet FEF criteria such as the school setting up an Industrial Advisory Committee as a resource.
- Linking students to the metal casting industry that provides opportunities for summer jobs and student internships (fellowships).
- Bringing together industry leaders and students near to graduation for discussions about job opportunities at the College Industry Conference (CIC) each autumn.
- Introducing young adults to the metal casting industry by sharing with them the experience and excitement inherent in the process of seeing molten metal poured and finished products taking shape.
- Hosting and managing numerous endowed scholarship funds for industry leaders, companies and societies that benefit students in metal casting education.

Scholarships and annual conference

Since 1947, FEF has distributed more than \$10m in scholarships and direct programme support. Annually, 85-90% of all funds received by FEF are disbursed for scholarships and programme support. On average, 75% of all FEF scholarship recipients begin working in the metal casting industry right after graduation each year.

FEF estimates that more than 30,000 students have benefited from its outreach and activities over the past 60 years or more.

The annual CIC is sponsored by the FEF to bring together students, professors and industry leaders; the brightest and the best students from the FEF schools across North America are chosen to attend.

Accreditation and leadership

While FEF espouses no universal metal casting curriculum, FEF school

accreditation assures the soundness of the school's metal casting educational program; the personal commitment of the FEF key professor to mentor and guide the students; the involvement of leaders of local industries in an ongoing relationship with the campus educational programme; a channel for FEF funding to qualified programmes; the responsiveness of educational practices to worksite needs; the opportunities for students to gain worksite experience and for industry representatives to have access to future qualified employees.

With such a long record of effectiveness, impact and accountability, FEF has continued to carry out its mission of 'helping today's students become tomorrow's leaders'.

FEF remains vital and strong due to the involvement of its volunteers; well-known industry leaders who recognise the significance of this foundation. Currently, 42 elected industry leaders from North America serve on the FEF board of directors, along with 10 past FEF board presidents. More than 55% of current board members were once FEF students.

Today, FEF maintains a small two-person staff with Bill Sorensen as the executive director since 1983. He was recognised and awarded the *Voya Kondic (VK) Medal* from the Institute of Cast Metals Engineers in the United Kingdom for 'outstanding service to education and training in the casting industry' in 2006. He is both the first American and the first non-academic to receive the VK Award.

Annual conference hailed a success

The 61st annual FEF College Industry Conference was held at the Drake Hotel, Chicago, USA with over 265 industry executives, student delegates, key professors and university administrators attending.

The conference began with the industry information session which gave 97 student delegates the opportunity to interact with representatives of 30 companies in the metal casting industry. The information session and social time is structured to facilitate the sharing of job opportunities and to connect students to potential employers.

During the general session, the following speakers addressed the conference attendees: Kathy Hayrynen (Applied Process Inc) spoke on the topic of *innovation and technology*; Raymond Monroe (Steel Founders' Society of America) spoke on *globalisation*; Michelle Keil (Caterpillar Inc) spoke on *sustainability*; and Peter Clark (Magellan) spoke on *end use of castings*.

The FEF/AFS *Distinguished Professor Award* was given to FEF key professor, John Berry, Mississippi State, in recognition of demonstrated personal interest in his students, as well as his genuine concern for student well being and knowledge of the industry. Bob Smillie (retired from Nematik) addressed the group during the Edward C Hoenicke Memorial Luncheon on the topic of *career paths in the industry*.

FEF's highest accolade, the *EJ Walsh Award*, was presented at the awards banquet to former FEF student and dean lifetime patron, Phil Duke, vice president of The Moat Company. The CIC delegate scholarships were also awarded and the volunteers and contributors to the FEF *Casting our Future NOW* campaign were highlighted and thanked.

In total, during the conference, \$54,000 in scholarships and awards was presented.

More information on this conference or any of the FEF activities can be obtained from the FEF office: Tel: +1 (0) 847 490 9200; fax: +1 (0) 847 890 6270; email: info@fefoffice.org web: www.fefinc.org



Excited student delegates at the entrance of the Drake Hotel, Chicago