The FEF Board of Directors and Staff extends sincere thanks to our company partners, alumni, individuals, organizations, and friends for their continued support of FEF. At this writing, that support is being tested. The Covid-19 pandemic has had effects on the way everyone does business – and FEF is no exception. For our board and FEF staff, the focus of our efforts will continue to be strategic engagement with the metalcasting industry to support FEF students and key professors. All of us feel there can be no significant interruption of scholarships and program funds to support developing the next generation of metalcasters. We remain, as ever, committed to that mission.

During the past 18 months, the FEF board has been working to “refresh” our five-year strategic plan. This refreshed plan will advance our organization with new initiatives in support of the metalcasting industry as we approach the 75th anniversary of the Foundation’s establishment.

FEF’s refreshed plan has several objectives, including creating strategic awareness of advanced manufacturing and metalcasting in high schools and in first- and second-year post-secondary programs. Many of us joined the metalcasting industry accidentally; FEF plans to effect a paradigm shift, so that young scholars will seek to become metalcasters intentionally!

With great success and through signature programs led by Key Professors, FEF has partnered with the industry to encourage third- and fourth-year students, as well as graduate students, to consider careers in metalcasting. FEF will strive to move upstream of that talent pipeline, engaging them earlier in their academic development to introduce them to the opportunities available in our industry.

Additional goals of the refreshed plan will be to increase branding of FEF, expanding our alumni touchpoints, and focusing more on valuable internships and co-op programs for students. For details, refer to the FEF website www.fefinc.org.

FEF also will continue to accelerate donor stewardship with strategic engagement activities, virtual and personal appeals, and creative opportunities to support students and programs. With the help of our industry partners, we will develop more “front-loaded” student experiences focused on tactical recruitment of young scholars as they enter university metalcasting programs.

FEF will be looking for new ways to: strengthen student-industry engagement, create advanced manufacturing learning experiences, and expand much needed scholarship support.

FEF will continue to create endowment funds for our programs to ensure laboratories can educate students in the latest technologies and industry standards.

As FEF prepares for future goals, even with the uncertainty at this time, we will continue our laser-like focus on our mission. We can carry out that mission only with the help of great partners committed to supporting FEF. Key Professors and students are counting on us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Tom Dempsey, John Grahek, Brian Lewis
Luke Schimmel – Vice President of Manufacturing, Olson Aluminum – 2017 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville

At UWP I learned a wide range of process knowledge and metallurgical knowledge, which gave me a solid foundation from which to refine and specialize as I joined my Olson Aluminum Team. My responsibilities now are to keep the foundry running and optimize production activity. While doing this, I deal daily with people, tooling design, advancement of the company, and a wide variety of other tasks. I would tell any student considering a metalcasting career that it is a great industry to join; I have not yet found anyone unwilling to help the students to gain experience, and most people will go out of their way to help out another person/foundry seeking some assistance. The metalcasting industry is very inviting; even foundries we compete against will open their doors to us for a tour, and will refer work back and forth to us, as we do with others.

Micca Belke – Metallurgical Engineer, Mercury Marine – 2017 graduate of Missouri University of Science & Technology

The biggest assist in my successful transition into the working world were the four summer internships I had during my college career. These work experiences really helped me to develop an idea of the kind of work-life balance I wanted, and could expect when I transitioned to full-time work. Outside of work responsibilities, I appreciate the privilege of being a member the FEF Cast Metals Advisory Board for Missouri S&T. Every September I travel back to Rolla and learn how the Metallurgical/Metals Casting program is going, and attend an AFS student chapter meeting where I can interact and network with current FEF students-seeking full-time positions and co-ops.

Mattie LaPrade – Manufacturing Engineer, American Cast Iron Pipe Co. – 2017 graduate of Virginia Tech

My experience at VA Tech taught me how to take apart equipment and put it back together, how to reline induction furnaces, and how to make different types of molds, and we did all the pouring and finishing ourselves. Since joining ACIPCO, I have had the opportunity to move through most of the major departments for the Ductile Iron Pipe product line, and this has given me an excellent view of how these departments work together to create a high-quality final product. I am also working with our Human Resources department on continuous improvement efforts related to our internship program and onboarding of young professionals. Needless to say, I have thoroughly enjoyed finding something I am passionate about and turning that into my career!

Each of these FEF alumni are involved in activities that encourage current FEF students to follow in their footsteps. The best way to project the FEF message is by example and word-of-mouth. FEF alumni and friends can make a world of difference!
The FEF *Refreshed Strategic Plan* creates a vision for the Foundation that ensures continuity of its mission and creates a strategy for recruiting a new and diverse pool of students, expands advanced manufacturing experiences for current students, and develops more partnerships with industry and alumni that will provide ongoing support for scholarships and internships.

As we move forward from the pandemic crisis, FEF will focus on several priorities in the *Refreshed Strategic Plan*:

**As our industry moves forward toward normal operating conditions over the coming months, FEF will look to its many partners to discuss these priorities of our new *Refreshed Strategic Plan*. FEF students and universities will need all of us working together to continue to sustain and grow the FEF model started by the metalcasting industry to develop its next leaders.**

**FEF will Inspire the Next Generation** by developing a “metalcasting pathway” that generates excitement about metalcasting with younger students. This means creating opportunities for connections to science and technical educators at the high-school level; developing creative recruitment activities that work directly with the universities and our Key Professors; and establishing special funds and grants for first and second-year students in conjunction with industry partners. These efforts will help to establish metalcasting as the “coolest industry” and showcase to students and their parents the many career opportunities available to them.

**FEF plans to Improve Current FEF Student Engagement and Experiences.** The *Expand on Our Success Project* will focus on: providing continuing advanced manufacturing experiences for current FEF students; developing their expertise in new materials and foundry processes; expanding and developing internship opportunities; and enriching networking opportunities with industry. The goal is to enhance FEF students’ technical training to include knowledge of Industry 4.0 and related advanced manufacturing capabilities.

**FEF wants to Sustain and Grow Top FEF Programs.** To *Shape Student Learning Experiences* we will accelerate opportunities for FEF schools to update and maintain their current metalcasting laboratories. Universities will work to align themselves with critical changes in the metalcasting industry and provide a more experiential education that trains students for future careers. FEF will engage the industry for feedback and support to ensure equipment and training are state-of-the-art and that technical educational experiences connect to the specific demands of the metalcasting industry.
Each year, FEF Staff and Board Members attend a variety of activities that include AFS regional conferences and chapter meetings, FEF Advisory Board meetings and school certification visits, the FEF College Industry Conference, and FEF School Foundry Nights, along with many other activities. This year, while our travels were stopped due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we still had many wonderful experiences – ON THE ROAD.

AFS Wisconsin and Southeast Regional Events

Foundry Nights

Scholarship Nights

Internship Visits, Board Meeting, Tailgates, AFS Chapter Meetings
The 2019 College Industry Conference (CIC) was held in November in Chicago – 140 company representatives had the opportunity to meet, network and interview 120 students representing 29 FEF certified and affiliated schools. According to one of the industry attendees, “The interaction with students as well as other people from other companies is invaluable!” That’s the reason the CIC is held. For nearly 75 years, FEF has been the link between colleges and the metalcasting community. Metalcasting employers will not find better-prepared young people than those students educated in the FEF network of schools. According to another industry attendee, “We had not been hiring but that has changed, so now I see it (FEF/FEF programs) as a useful tool to find the right applicants that understand what a foundry is.”

During the Awards Luncheon, 29 CIC scholarships totaling $67,500.00 were awarded to students in attendance. Receiving a scholarship is a highlight for the students attending, of course, but just as important is the opportunity to meet with multiple companies and discuss future employment options. Two of the students who received special CIC scholarships were Cole Pike from Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo and Cadell VanDenHeuvel from Wisconsin-Madison. Asked about his interaction with the exhibitor companies, Cole said: “I talked to representatives from many different companies; some representatives even offered to help get me in touch with other casting companies that might be closer to where I’m from …”. Cadell added: “I was able to speak with several companies, which ultimately led to the beginning of the application/interview process.” (Cole will graduate in 2021; Cadell graduated this past spring.)

The speakers for the 2019 CIC were Lindsey McCall, Manufacturing Engineer-Steel Pipe Quality Assurance at American Cast Iron Pipe, and Emily Shedlarski, who was a Project Engineer with Mueller Water Products and now works for Simpson Technologies. Shedlarski encouraged the students to “know your wants and needs … there are plenty of places for you in this industry”; and to “put your heart into your work.” McCall’s message included “your best spot is not always the most comfortable one”; and “learn every available skill while at any job.” The messages from both speakers were encouraging as well as informative, for the students and for all attendees.

FEF’s highest industry award, the E.J. Walsh Award, was presented to Kathy Hayrynen, Applied Process Inc. and a graduate of Michigan Tech. The FEF/AFS Distinguished Professor Award was presented to Laura Bartlett, who is serving as FEF Key Professor at her alma mater, Missouri Univ. of Science & Technology.
Corporate Contributors

Note: These are companies who made a contribution to FEF between 5/1/19 and 4/30/2020
* = first time contributor

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During the past year more than $1.6 million of FEF funds were applied to support students on their academic journeys. These funds provided scholarship support, supported world-class metalcasting educational programs, and helped students to participate in a variety of experiences such as attending AFS chapter and regional meetings, entering casting competitions, organizing student chapter activities, going on plant tours, and internships.

Our primary focus this year has been to create new and expanded student experiences, including exposure to advanced manufacturing concepts, research and experiments with new materials, and understanding new foundry processes. Additionally, we are working with many FEF schools on plans to upgrade laboratories and programs in the years ahead, to enhance their academic standards.

As we embrace new teaching activities and laboratories, we continue to need to provide student scholarships that will ensure FEF students can continue their academic progress. Giving Tuesday is a nationwide program to promote charitable donations on a target day, which FEF has used to focus fundraising among FEF alumni to support students with similar dreams.

A “friendly” competition among the alumni of different FEF scholarships during the past two years. For 2020, Giving Tuesday will be Tuesday, December 1.

New for 2020, FEF will stage an Alumni Giving Challenge from October 1 through Giving Tuesday, December 1. More details will be announced soon.

The success of FEF students and schools can endure only with the support of generous alumni and friends. We thank everyone who participated and contributed during 2018 and 2019. Let’s work together to make the 2020 competition even more rewarding for the Foundation and these young metalcasters!