



# AIST Young Professionals



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

Although my last name is perfect for the industry, my involvement in steel started while doing undergraduate research on medical-grade stainless steels. This led to my curiosity for metallurgy in the medical industry, and I began looking for opportunities to explore the applications of metallurgy. During the fall of 2022, I simultaneously applied for the AIST Steel Intern Scholarship and an internship through Nucor. I received the scholarship and a co-op with Nucor-Yamato Steel Co. in Blytheville, Ark., USA. Those six months were consequential to falling in love with this industry and put me on a path to looking for every opportunity for personal and professional growth within the industry.

### 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 earned my B.S. degree in metallurgical and materials engineering from the Colorado School of Mines. During my time at Mines, I was fortunate to receive the AIST Steel Intern Scholarship twice, as well as the Elwood Metallurgy Scholarship. These scholarships not only provided financial support but also gave me invaluable exposure to the steel industry. The AIST Steel Intern Scholarship played a pivotal role in shaping my engineering career path from medicine to metallurgy. It provided me with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and to explore different facets of the industry and refine my career aspirations. These experiences reinforced my passion for the steel industry and solidified my commitment to pursuing a long-term career in it. I was also an active member of my school's Material Advantage Chapter, which included membership benefits through AIST. Through this involvement, I was able to expand my technical knowledge and engage with professionals across different areas of materials science.

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

The steel industry has a significant generational gap, which makes it even more valuable to have a strong network of young professionals who will drive its future. Personally, I have benefited from connecting with peers who are just as passionate about the industry as I am. While learning from those who came before us is essential, it is just as important to build relationships with our own generation of steel professionals. By networking with peers, we not only strengthen our industry's future but also gain diverse perspectives, fresh ideas and a shared sense of purpose in tackling the challenges we face ahead.

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

I find that steel is one of the few industries that continuously pushes the boundaries of innovation while ensuring that these advancements are sustainable for the foreseeable future. Unlike many industries that prioritize short-term efficiency, steelmaking must balance progress with long-term viability, considering environmental impact, economic feasibility and operational efficiency. Being one of the most essential industries in the world, every innovation must not only enhance efficiency and quality for steelmakers but also provide broader



benefits to society. Whether through advancements in decarbonization, process automation, or materials science, the industry's evolution directly influences global progress. This commitment to innovation is evident in the rigorous training and development opportunities provided to those in the industry, fostering fast and accurate high-stakes problem-solving. Steelmaking is dynamic, and the ability to adapt to challenges in real time is crucial. The industry thrives on collaboration, bringing together plant operators, engineers, technical experts, and suppliers to drive improvements across safety, productivity and product performance. This teamwork fuels continuous enhancement, ensuring that the industry remains competitive, resilient and forward-thinking.

### What will the Young Professionals (YP) Programming Subcommittee bring to YPs in the industry?

The programming subcommittee of the Young Professionals Membership Committee was formed to plan and organize networking and education programs aimed at supporting the development of young professionals. The current events that it supports are the Young Professionals and Board of Directors Virtual Mentor Mixer, soft skills webinars and the Young Professionals Roundtable at AISTech. Having this subcommittee will allow those interested in getting involved in the planning

### 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](https://AIST.org/membership) or contact Lauren Veltre at +1.724.814.3082 or [lveltre@aist.org](mailto:lveltre@aist.org).

and hosting of these events to do so, ultimately improving engagement in respective events moving forward. As the first chair of this subcommittee, I am so excited to get to work with young professionals in a variety of different roles industrywide!

### Looking back on your transition from student to professional, what strategies helped you adapt to the steel industry the most?

I think the best strategy for transitioning from a student to an industry professional is to set aside the fear of not knowing the correct answer and instead leaning into problem-solving and continuous learning. The steel industry is highly collaborative, and success does not come from always having the right answer;

it comes from knowing how to find the right answer. Asking questions, seeking mentorship and learning from experience will take you much further than hesitating out of fear of making mistakes.

One of the biggest hurdles young professionals face is impostor syndrome, and if you let that doubt take over, it can hold you back from reaching your full potential. However, what I have found is that this industry is filled with people who genuinely want to help. Every engineer, operator, and metallurgist I have met has been incredibly supportive and willing to share their knowledge.

This being said, the steel industry is not for the faint of heart. It requires resilience, adaptability and a willingness to constantly improve. The biggest mistake a young professional can make in this industry is becoming complacent, whether in your daily duties, your safety mindset or your drive to keep learning. If you approach every challenge with curiosity, stay engaged in your work and support your colleagues, you will not only succeed but thrive in this industry. ♦