

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



Scott L. Melnick

My eldest nephew, a senior in high school, is enmeshed in robotics—not the robot wars on the cable television, but serious scholastic competitions. So it came as no surprise the other night when my brother told me Ted was planning to attend Drexel to study mechanical engineering. During our conversation, my brother mentioned how impressed he was by the support Ted had received from so many diverse groups, ranging from universities to technical associations.

And that got me thinking about AISC and its relationship with students. The two most widely publicized AISC university programs are the 10-year-old Student Bridge Competition and the Steel Sculpture Program (which now includes nearly 100 sculptures on campuses throughout the U.S.).

But AISC's university education program is much more than just those two programs. For example, last year marked the inauguration of AISC's joint effort with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture to hold a design competition for architectural students. More than 300 students from 37 schools submitted a total of 269 design projects to the first competition.

AISC also provides direct aid to students through the generous support of the steel construction industry. In 2001, the AISC Education Foundation awarded two scholarships and nine fellowships totaling \$41,000. Equally important, AISC provides the *Manual of Steel Construction* to students at substantially reduced prices.

Also in 2001, AISC introduced a new web-enhanced teaching aid to 82 university educators. Developed by Professor Kim Roddis of the University of Kansas, the teaching aid consists of a case study of the design of a fictitious three-story steel braced-frame office building. The main goal of this teaching aid is to provide

instructors with a tool to expose students to design of steel building elements in a realistic building context. This tool bridges the gap between typical textbook element design examples and the design situations students will encounter in a realistic professional environment. To facilitate the distribution of the material through the use of the Internet, the drawings are in Autocad electronic files and the calculations use Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. According to many of the educators who have seen the program, it should provide a substantial boost to undergraduate steel education.

Another intriguing AISC project is the Adopt-A-School program. This program matches fabrication shops with universities offering steel design programs. The fabricators offer shop tours to student groups, provide NASCC sponsorship for faculty, and often offer internships and co-op opportunities. Currently, more than 130 schools have been "adopted."

To learn more about AISC's university education programs, visit AISC's website at www.aisc.org. Or, drop by the AISC booth at this year's North American Steel Construction Conference and chat with my friend Fromy Rosenberg, AISC's Director of University Relations.

P.S.—while we're on the topic of education, don't forget about continuing education for practicing professionals. In addition to AISC's excellent seminar series, make sure you make plans to attend the NASCC this year in Seattle from April 24-27. Check out the full program by visiting www.aisc.org/nascc.html or by calling 312.670.2400.

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