

## ...an IMe-News Posting...

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### FEF conference offers students opportunity to network in metal casting industry

Six IME students attended the 2006 Foundry Educational Foundation College Industry Conference (FEF CIC) held last November with **Dr. Sam Ramrattan**, a specialist in material and process and the WMU FEF Key Professor, and **Dr. Tim Greene**, dean of WMU's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

The 59-year-old conference is held annually in Chicago. The current FEF President is **Bill Barrett**, president and CEO of Neenah Foundry Co., who was inducted into the CEAS Alumni Excellence Academy in 2006.

The WMU student delegates were **Adam Bell (ME)**, **Kyle Manduch (EGR)**, **Ryan Miller (MFT)**, **Charles Ponscheck (MFT)**, **Matthew Rutledge (EGR)**, and **Scott Seckel (MFT)**.

Ramrattan described the conference as "an exciting event" that actively reaches out to engineering colleges and universities in North America. WMU is one of only 25 in the world to be accredited by this foundation.

Seckel said the conference gave student delegates the opportunity to interact with representatives of companies in the metal casting industry. "There were as many as six delegates from numerous colleges from across the country," he said. "The information section is structured to connect students to potential employers."

According to Manduch, an EGR senior, the group spent the first night meeting representatives from a number of companies. "It was a great opportunity not only to meet companies, but to network with others in the metal casting industry," he said. "It was a fun night, where we [he and Miller] went out and about in downtown Chicago. We ended up at the Signature Room on the top of the Hancock Center, where we enjoyed the beautiful night lights of Chicago while networking with Honda representatives."

A special feature of this year's event was a fundraising silent auction held at the awards banquet in which industry leaders competed to purchase Super Bowl XL football tickets. Proceeds from the auction will benefit students in metal casting programs.

Students attend the conference for the opportunity to win scholarships and to network with representatives from industry. "Companies attend this conference to help promote their names and to

look at students who could potentially become part of their teams," Seckel said.



Representing WMU at the 2006 FEF CIC: front row (l-r) Scott Seckel, Dr. Sam Ramrattan, and Adam Bell and back row (l-r) Charles Ponscheck, Ryan Miller, Kyle Manduch, Matt Rutledge, and Dr. Tim Greene

The conference presentations included an update of current work being done by a recent engineering graduate, a review of changes in the industry from an engineer who has spent his life in the metal casting field, and an overview of positions presently available to graduates in the metal casting field. "The last discussion was primarily about the new wave of technology and the future of casting technology," Manduch said. "After the conferences, we were able to tour the night life of Chicago."

Manduch described the conference experience as a "very beneficial" one that seemed like a "family reunion" and offered lifelong learning experiences the students would be unable to get in a class. "It was like a giant metal-casting family," he said. "Everyone knew everyone else, and I learned stuff I will take with me for the rest of my life."

Describing his conference experience as "very valuable," Seckel said he had his first "very tasty" dinner interview, which led to a second interview and a job offer that he accepted as the Casting Engineering Manager at Blackhawk Foundry in Davenport, IA. "The opportunities presented to students like me are the result of attending industry conferences like this," he said.

Opinions and ideas, please! Send your thoughts on this article or your suggestions for future article topics to the editor at [jerrie.fiala@wmich.edu](mailto:jerrie.fiala@wmich.edu) Thank you.