

SEAMass – Massachusetts | 2020 Young Member Group of the Year Finalist

What events has your Young Member Group hosted (including education sessions, site tours, outreach, exam review, etc.) to foster professional development among your members? What event or activity did your membership find to be the most beneficial and why?

Our young members say their favorite event is tours of projects under construction hosted by the structural engineers. We were able to host two tours in the heart of Boston. One was the Hub on Causeway, a \$1.2 billion dollar development with over 1 million square feet of mixed-use space. The second tour was the Government Center Garage Redevelopment, a 45-story tower complete with an outdoor pool deck on the 9th floor. Both events had engineers from our main member organization present on their roles and challenges in the project. Afterwards, we held a networking event where engineers were able to connect with the presenters and continue to foster and form new connections with young engineers.

We hosted two other interactive social events including a summer celebration and a holiday party. The summer celebration was hosted on the roof-top patio of one of the structural engineering offices in Boston. The event was complete with food and games including Jenga, which became quite competitive among a group of structural engineers!

Ultimately, our most beneficial event was the Intro to SE/PE Exam Seminar. Due to the positive feedback, it is an event we have hosted annually, in-person for 4 years in a row. Although we had to cancel our in-person event, we hosted the event virtually for over 50 engineers in 11 states. This event included 2 recently licensed professional engineers from SEAMASS providing guidance on registration and study tips. The event concluded time to network with out-of-state peers we rarely get the opportunity to connect with.

This was hands down the most beneficial event of the year. We were able to reach the largest audience of any event we've hosted to date, provide an event of true interest, and challenge ourselves as a Board to offer our first ever virtual event.

What has your Young Member Group done to reach out to new young members over the last year and/or to increase participation/engagement of your members? Discuss how your actions have led to membership growth and/or increased participation. Please also indicate the size of the Young Member Group relative to the SEA membership.

We started this year by making listing goals we wanted to achieve. Our main goal was to get involved with structural programs at local universities. We realized few people join SEAMASS straight out of school and people tend to go several years before finding their way to SEAMASS. To improve that, we are focused on increasing our involvement at a student level. By creating awareness early on, we can help grow the membership earlier and believe it will encourage groups of peers to join together.

Our goal was not only get involved with local universities, but to support a team in the Timber-Strong Competition at the Summit. In Fall 2019, we reached out to university professors so we could get in front of the students. At the 2019 Summit, we spoke with students and team leaders at the Timber-Strong Competition about their biggest challenges, fundraising, and setting up NCSEA student chapters. Afterwards, we presented at Wentworth Institute of Technology about SEAMASS, the competition, and having interested students sign-up! Although we had to push pause, we have made tremendous headway into our new focus on student outreach!

Since we were unable to pursue certain goals we set this year, we shifted our focus to other ways to make our YMG better. We were encouraged after learning about Nebraska's YMG survey at the Summit and decided it was a great way to better understand our membership. Who is attending our events? Do they come back? Why do people choose not to sign up for events? We are excited to use the survey results to increase participation and engagement of our young members.

This year, our YMG membership increased to 25% of the whole member organization! With our focus on student outreach, we expect to grow even more over the next few years!

What has your Young Member Group done to foster networking with senior members of your MO, within the YMG, and with other disciplines (i.e. architects, contractors)? What lessons/educational opportunities have come from interacting with these groups?

We noticed the connection between the senior and young members could improve. In collaboration with our MO, we realized we were likely limiting event attendance by how we hosted events. For example, the typical event hosted by the MO is held in the morning at a venue north of the city. For members who live south of the city, do not have a car/commute with public transportation, have childcare duties in the morning, etc. were being excluded from our events. We made a goal to make a change with two events this year. The first was to host an event for the whole member organization in the afternoon, in the city (Boston), with a networking hour to promote connection between our senior and young members of SEAMASS. The second was to host another similar event as a kick-off for the local SE3 chapter with a mentoring component. Although we had to cancel these events due to the pandemic, we are in great shape to hold more inclusive events and improve the connections between our young and senior members very soon.

The action taken with the most impact during the pandemic, was adding a social media coordinator to our YMG board. Prior to this year we did not have any social media presence. This year we focused on promoting not only the YMG events, but the events of the main SEAMASS organization, and events of related professional organizations. This encourages cross networking and being more connected with AEC industry, which is especially important during this time of isolation!