

MNSEA – Minnesota | 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?

Harris Rebar Fabrication Shop Tour (11/21/2019)

MNSEA YMG members were given the opportunity to see how rebar is fabricated for all types of concrete members at the Harris Rebar Fabrication Shop in Minneapolis. Harris staff were present to answer questions, ranging from detailing issues, to how difficult it is to bend a #14 bar! The tour was a great opportunity for members to learn about the practical side of detailing concrete reinforcing. A happy hour followed the tour at a local brewery. Senior MNSEA members were also invited, making this a meaningful opportunity for both education and networking.

Pillsbury Hall Virtual Site Tour (6/25/2020)

The MNSEA YMG recognizes the importance of staying connected with our members, fostering opportunities for professional growth, and being resilient. Since the onset of COVID-19, we've gotten creative with our programming, hosting numerous virtual events. Our most impactful was a live virtual tour of the Pillsbury Hall renovation at the University of Minnesota.

Previously used for science research, this 130-year-old building is currently being converted into the new home of the English Department. Roughly 30 members tuned into a Zoom meeting where the project engineer (BKBM) led a tour with the job superintendent (JE Dunn), noting some of the more challenging aspects of the design. The tour offered a look at archaic building types, renovation strategies, construction methods, and how to react to unknown conditions that come with historic buildings. Careful planning was required, including broadcasting tests and extensive coordination with the engineer, contractor, and college. Our planning paid off with a successful event that allowed for continued member engagement during isolation.

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.

The MNSEA YMG has made a concerted effort to engage with students and new engineers. I will highlight two events that specifically contributed to an increase in membership and participation.

In order to ease the transition between school and industry, the YMG has cultivated a "First Year of Your Career" presentation. The presentation focuses on key skills that are often not addressed in school, such as how to communicate effectively, how to approach unfamiliar software, and how to balance your career with other aspects of your life. Past feedback has been so positive, that professors at the UMN have weaved the content into the senior capstone curriculum, asking us to present each semester. We presented to over 30 students in November 2019, many of whom continue to attend events now that they have graduated.

In April 2020, our planned presentation hit an obstacle with the onset of COVID-19. So, we decided to pivot to a virtual presentation. Our quick thinking gave us a unique opportunity to provide value to an audience beyond our MO. The presentation was offered as a live webinar, reaching not only UMN students, but also over 80 people as far away as New Zealand!

In February of 2020, as part of our continued efforts to engage new members, the YMG held a "Welcome to MNSEA" event. Members, new and old, were invited to join us for a night of networking and fun playing WhirlyBall. Our past president welcomed everyone with a brief presentation about the benefits of MNSEA membership. Following the presentation, attendees enjoyed food and friendly competition. While all MNSEA members were invited to this event, we had an especially large number of new members and students, many who said the fun of WhirlyBall encouraged them to attend their first MNSEA event.

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?

The MNSEA YMG has built a reputation for inclusion and meaningful partnership with other professional groups. This year, we helped our members expand their professional networks with a number of collaborative events.

After a successful inaugural dodgeball tournament last year, the MNSEA YMG hosted the Second Annual Young Professional Dodgeball Tournament in January 2020. The event provided a means for young professionals to network and build relationships outside of a professional setting. Participation rose from 48 people in 2019, to over 130 people on 17 teams, making the tournament the most well-attended event in the history of the MNSEA YMG. The large turnout made for a stiff competition, with time for professional networking between games. Teams spanned all disciplines of engineering, architecture, contracting, fabrication, and interior design.

The MNSEA YMG continues to cultivate a relationship with the larger membership of our MO by specifically inviting senior members to our events regularly. This year, MNSEA members were invited to participate in our tour of the Harris Rebar fabrication plant, our virtual tour of Pillsbury Hall, and our "Welcome to MNSEA" WhirlyBall Night. Having senior membership present at our events not only helps our young members to expand their personal networks, but also helps them to gain an understanding of MNSEA as an organization. Furthermore, it encourages YMG members to continue to participate in the MO beyond the YMG, as shown by the handful of our members who have moved directly from the YMG to take on a leadership position within MNSEA.