

SEI Futures Fund

Pursuing Our Vision for Structural Engineering

By Glenn R. Bell, P.E., S.E., SECB, F.SEI, F.ASCE, 2019 Chair, SEI Futures Fund Board of Directors



In 2013, the Structural Engineering Institute published *A Vision for the Future of Structural Engineering and Structural Engineers: A case for change* (the SEI Vision – www.asce.org/SEI). The SEI Vision lays out an inspiring view of what the structural engineering profession could be by the year 2033, and it makes a number of recommendations for SEI Board of Governors' action to lead us to that vision. The recommendations include bold initiatives involving (1) education for innovation and leadership and (2) professional practice for innovation and leadership. Recognizing the massive need for professional volunteerism and financial resources necessary to bring about the SEI Vision, SEI established, in 2013, the SEI Futures Fund (SEIFF).

Every dollar contributed to the SEI Futures Fund goes directly to profession-building initiatives identified and approved by the SEIFF Board. The SEI Futures Fund operates in collaboration with the ASCE Foundation for administrative and professional fundraising expertise.

The goals of the SEI Futures Fund are unique: to advance the art, science, and practice of structural engineering for a brighter future for our profession. It does this by funding strategic initiatives outside the normal bounds of the SEI operating budget. It does not support scientific research. The four strategic priorities for funding are to:

- Invest in the future of the profession,
- Promote student interest in structural engineering,
- Support younger members involvement in SEI, and
- Provide opportunities for professional development.

Fundraising is driven primarily by the Futures Fund Board members. Donors may be individuals, companies, or organizations. The Board's strategy for individuals has been top-down, ensuring we have the support and commitment of the SEI Board, the SEIFF Board, and the many SEI committees, chapters, and members. Progress along this route has been excellent. Presently, about 65% of all donations come from individuals, 20% from corporations, and 15% from ticket sales at the annual gala held at Structures Congress (more on this below.) However, we have far more to go. Only a small fraction of SEI's more than 30,000 members contribute. **Imagine what we could do for the profession if everyone was engaged!**

A tremendous supporter of SEI and the Futures Fund (and the structural engineering profession in general) has been Ashraf Habibullah, founder and CEO of Computers and Structures Inc. Since 2016, Ashraf has hosted a gala at Structures Congress celebrating the structural engineering profession and promoting its future. The pinnacle social event at Congress, it is always great fun and profoundly inspiring. We invite you to join us next April at Structures Congress in Orlando.

Examples of activities that SEIFF has supported in the last few years include:

- Scholarships for students and young professionals to attend Structures Congress
- Support to launch the new SEI Global Activities Division
- Beta testing to live stream sessions at Structures Congress
- Creation of an SEI Global Practices Guideline document (to be published early 2019)
- Research in support of SE licensure
- Support for ASCE Continuing Education Webinars for SEI Chapters and SEI Graduate Student Chapters
- Stakeholder workshops for Continuing Education



2018 SEI Futures Fund Student and Young Professional Scholarship Recipients.

Initiatives that the SEIFF Board has funded for 2019 include more than \$100,000 for:

- *Investigating the Future of SE Licensure*: This will provide a comprehensive view of SE Licensure and the various options for a path to 2033.
- *SEI Standards lecture for SEI Chapters*: This initiative seeks a win-win by increasing knowledge of SEI standards and providing resources for increasing attendance at SEI Chapter meetings.
- *SE 2050 Sustainability Commitment Initiative Workshop*: This will support a planning workshop for the SE 2050 Initiative for structural engineers to meet embodied carbon benchmarks.
- *SEI Codes & Standards Young Professional Program*: This is an extension of a highly effective initiative to involve young professionals in various SEI codes and standards activities.
- *SEI Student & Young Professional Scholarships to Structures Congress*: These scholarships are intended to draw more students and young professionals into SEI activities by supporting scholarships to attend Structures Congress.
- *SEI Local Leadership Conference Facilitation Training*: This follows the SEI Vision goal of leadership development for structural engineers.

So, how can you help? First, if you are not already a regular donor, please consider becoming one. This is our future at stake! If you are a donor and are comfortable recruiting others, let us know. We need to leverage our voice. And, finally, if you have an idea for a proposed SEI Futures Fund activity to advance the profession, let us know, regardless of whether you or someone you know are interested in advancing the idea.

This year's SEI Futures Fund Board is Ed DePaola, Anne Ellis, Jon Magnusson, John Tawresey, and myself. We would be pleased to talk with you about getting involved.

Learn more and give at www.asce.org/SEIFuturesFund.

