

# Industry Impact, Part 2

Through the ACI Foundation’s Fellowship and Scholarship Program

by Veronica C. Nehasil and Ann M. Masek

For over 30 years, the ACI Foundation has been making strategic investments in ideas, research, and people to help create the future of the concrete industry. The ACI Foundation has focused on building a future in which students, young professionals, and researchers have the knowledge and resources needed to implement the use of concrete correctly and innovatively in our changing society.

## Growth of the Scholarship and Fellowship Program

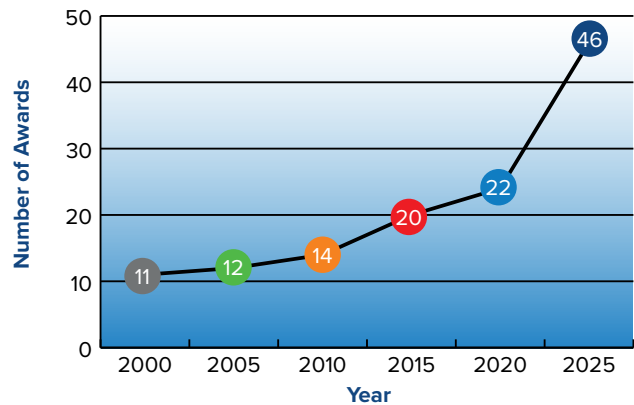
Twenty years ago, the ACI Foundation funded 11 awards—most of them scholarships—and now, coming into the 2024 cycle of applications and awards, has 46 awards available for students; more than tripling the impact that can be made on not only the futures of hopeful students, but the future success of the concrete industry.

A significant change came in 2008 when the vision of ACI Past Presidents Dan Baker, Jim Cagley, and Tom Verti championed the launch of an enhanced Fellowship program. Besides the monetary support for educational expenses, Fellowship recipients were now also supported to attend three ACI conventions, one of which includes an in-person interview with the ACI Foundation’s Scholarship Council. At the convention, they can connect with industry mentors, visit technical committees, give presentations, fill leadership roles in the Student and Young Professional Activities Committees (SYPAC), and develop their peer network.

Another major change occurred in 2018, when the ACI Foundation officially revived fundraising for its programs, after a nearly decade-long hiatus due to the 2008 recession. The resurgence of community donations since then has nearly doubled our available awards. In the last 5 years, the number of available awards has increased by 95%, and the number of applicants has increased by 91%, keeping our award program highly competitive.

The growth and impact of the ACI Foundation program have been made possible through the very generous donations and engagement of our concrete community, including ACI which fully funds our operational costs so that 100% of community donations go to students, research, or innovation. Thank you, donors!

Growth of Fellowship/Scholarship Program 2002-2024



Impact of the ACI Foundation Fellowship and Scholarship program has more than tripled

## Volunteering and Paying it Forward

The Scholarship Council recently welcomed seven new volunteers: all of whom have received either a Foundation Fellowship or a Foundation Scholarship during their respective careers. These new members were specifically invited in part due to their past award experiences, and to help bring more attention and focus to the real needs of students and young professionals following in their footsteps. As previous award winners and concrete professionals, our

volunteers possess valuable expertise and knowledge in their field. Serving on the Scholarship Council allows them to share their expertise, contribute to the decision-making process, and influence the growth and development of the program. Our new volunteers have received an award and firsthand experience of the challenges and obstacles students face. Their perspective can provide valuable insights into the selection criteria, evaluation process, and the overall impact of the awards.

**New Scholarship Council Members Fall 2023:**

- **Joseph Clendenen**, Holcim, 2003-2004 ACI Foundation Student Fellowship;
- **Anthony DeCarlo**, Dominion Concrete Services, 2001-2002 ACI Foundation Student Fellowship;
- **Raissa Ferron**, The University of Texas at Austin, 2002-2003 ACI Foundation Student Fellowship;
- **Royce Floyd**, University of Oklahoma, 2009-2010 ACI Presidents’ Fellowship;
- **Robert Moser**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2008-2009 ACI Foundation W.R. Grace Scholarship;
- **Kevin Mueller**, Thornton Tomasetti, 2010-2011 ACI Foundation Kumar Mehta Scholarship; and
- **Heather Todak**, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., 2015-2016 ACI Foundation Scholarship.

These volunteers join the veterans of the ACI Foundation’s Scholarship Council, whose effort and insight have sustained and grown the program over the years.

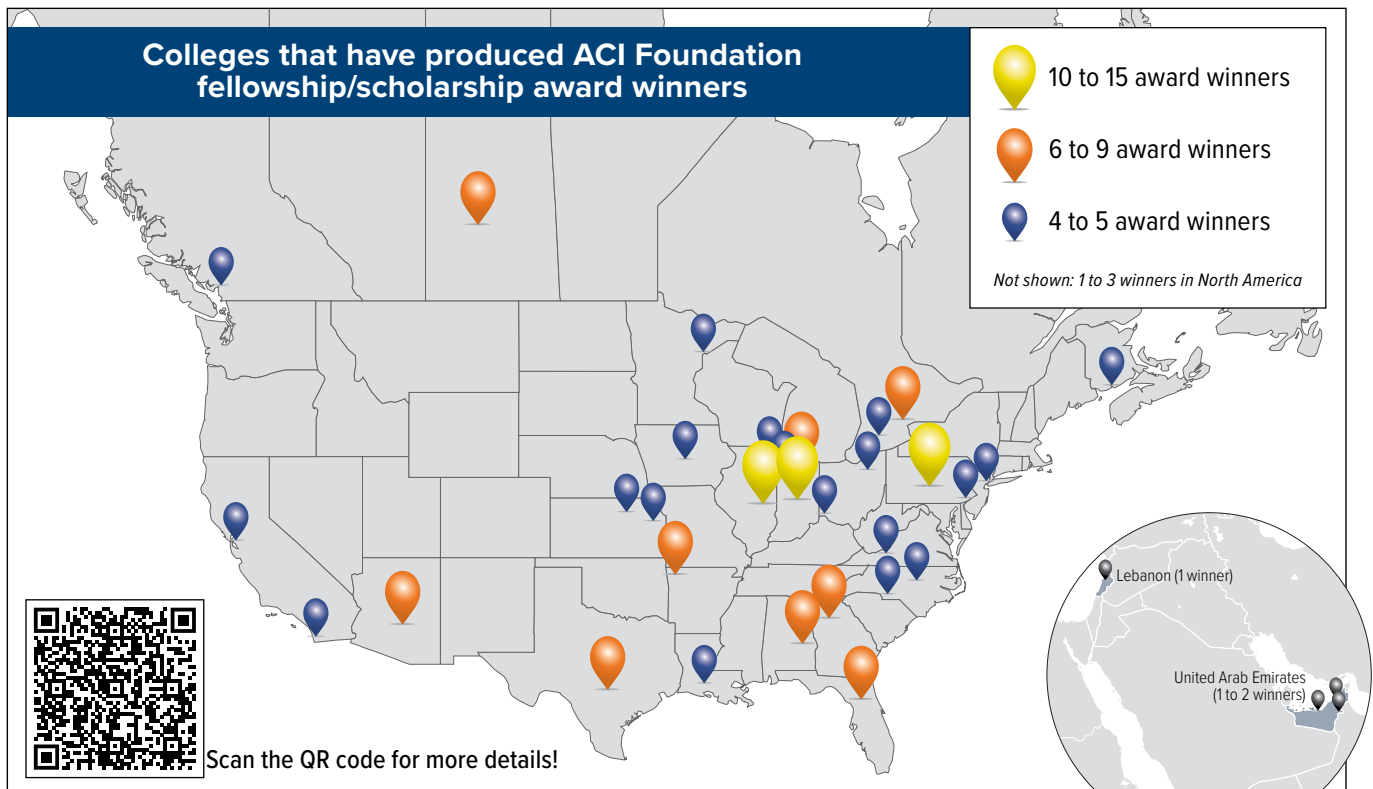
**Veteran Scholarship Council Members Fall 2023:**

- **Scott Anderson**, Stanford University;
- **Tyler Baggett**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- **Tonya Beesley**, Baker Concrete Construction, Inc.;
- **Anahid Behrouzi**, California Polytechnic State Institute, San Luis Obispo;
- **Heather Brown**, Irving Materials, Inc.;
- **Neil Hawkins**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign;
- **Cecil Jones**, Diversified Engineering Services, Inc.;
- **J. Scott Keim**, Bureau of Reclamation;
- **Amy Numbers**, Advancing Organizational Excellence;
- **Debrethann Orsak**, Cagley Associates, Inc.;
- **Anton Schindler** (Chair), Auburn University; and
- **Kejin Wang**, Iowa State University.

**Mentorship**

Those who choose to mentor ACI Foundation Fellowship awardees offer inspiration and guidance to individuals beginning their careers in the concrete industry. Mentors are a source of knowledge and expertise, networking, and help identifying educational and career growth opportunities during a frequently stressful time for students and young professionals.

All fellowship awardees are given the opportunity to connect with a mentor. Please consider donating your time and knowledge to mentor the future leaders of our industry. To find out more about the ACI Foundation Fellowship Mentor



Colleges attended by ACI Foundation Fellowship and Scholarship recipients

program or to become a mentor, contact Chandice Moore, ACI Foundation Program Manager, at [chandice.moore@acifoundation.org](mailto:chandice.moore@acifoundation.org).

### By the Numbers

#### 2002-2023 data (last 20 years)

- Awarded 330+ students
- 53% fellowship recipients
- 47% scholarship recipients
- Provided over 2.7M USD to support students
- Total awardee industry retention is 93%
- Total awardee ACI retention is 67%

|             | Entered academia, % | Entered industry such as construction/contracting, materials or equipment suppliers, designers, architecture/engineering firms, government/owners, etc., % |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
| Scholarship | 46                  | 54   |
| Fellowship  | 28                  | 72   |



**Veronica C. Nehasil** is a Junior Program Coordinator and Database Developer with the ACI Foundation. She frequently writes or contributes to the Foundation's *Concrete International* articles. Nehasil received the 2021 College of the Atlantic Bill Carpenter Award for Writing. She received her BA in human ecology from the College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, ME, USA.



**Ann M. Masek** is the Executive Director of the ACI Foundation and a Certified Association Executive. She has worked in the concrete industry for 26 years. She has been building and leading the ACI Foundation team (an amazing staff of five plus dozens of excellent volunteers) for the last decade in support of a wide range of research, innovation, and educational initiatives that facilitate progress in the concrete construction industry.

### Giving to the ACI Foundation

Bryant and Katharine Mather were both distinguished and accomplished contributors to concrete knowledge. The Katharine and Bryant Mather Scholarship was created through a bequest to the ACI Foundation from their estate. They had a passion for the industry that they helped to advance. Their friends' and colleagues' commitment to their legacy boosted the bequest with additional donations, making it one of the longest-running scholarships within the ACI Foundation.

The ACI Foundation programs, including its Fellowships and Scholarships, rely on individuals and organizations who also want to pay it forward and give back to the industry that they advanced and for which they have a passion.

A gift to the ACI Foundation as part of your financial plan will carry your technical legacy into the future of the concrete industry. It's never too early to plan your legacy; contact Kari Martin, ACI Foundation Fundraising Manager, at +1.248.848.3757 or [kari.martin@acifoundation.org](mailto:kari.martin@acifoundation.org), to start the conversation.

For more information, visit [www.acifoundation.org/giving/plannedgiving.aspx](http://www.acifoundation.org/giving/plannedgiving.aspx).

Selected for reader interest by the editors.

### Apply for a Scholarship or Fellowship

Applications open July 1, 2024. Visit [www.ACIFoundation.org](http://www.ACIFoundation.org) for details on how to prepare. Scholarship awards are 5000 USD for tuition; Fellowship awards are 10,000 USD for educational expenses and expenses to attend ACI Conventions.

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