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Building Careers, One Summer at a Time

SUMMER IS HERE! While this season brings us opportunities to get outside and enjoy the sunshine, it is also the busiest part of the annual construction cycle. (Has anyone else noticed that nearly every road seems to be under construction?)

During this busy time of year, many of us welcome students into our offices as summer interns and temporary workers. These students are eager to learn about all things related to building enclosure consulting, but getting them up to speed quickly enough that they can share some of the workload is no small task.

Many of us have spent years collecting the experience and knowledge that helps us be successful in our day-to-day professional activities. So how do we transfer that knowledge to students entering the workforce? I think there are two main strategies to achieve this goal: connect students with IIBEC and foster mentoring relationships.

A simple way to connect students and interns with IIBEC is through student membership. This type of membership, which is open to full-time undergraduate or graduate students majoring in a construction-related curriculum, provides access to the same wealth of IIBEC resources that we rely on to support our own lifelong learning, including in-person and online core courses, local chapter meetings, and IIBEC publications.

We can also encourage students to connect with the IIBEC community at the Building Enclosure Symposium (BES) and the IIBEC International Convention and Trade Show. If you are working with students this summer, please let them know they can apply for funding from the RCI-IIBEC Foundation to help them attend these events. Applications for the Joe Hale Student Sponsorship for this year's BES in Indianapolis, Indiana, will be accepted until July 31, 2026. The foundation also offers needs-based scholarships for both undergraduates and graduate students. Information and application materials can be accessed on the RCI-IIBEC Foundation website (<https://rci-iibecfoundation.org/scholarships>).

Students represent the future of our profession and the next generation of leadership

for IIBEC. As they start their career journeys, they need mentors to help them define and achieve their goals—and we all benefit by taking on mentorship roles. In my interactions with students, I have observed that they are bright and always hungry to learn. They have a level of curiosity and enthusiasm that is contagious. One of the rewarding things about working with them is getting to see their excitement as they start to connect classroom concepts with real-world applications.

As an added benefit, mentoring students gives us the opportunity to hone our own leadership, communication, and technical skills. To teach or explain a concept, you have to be able to break it down, articulating complex ideas in a way that is easy for someone new to the industry to understand. That process requires mastery. And who knows? Maybe we can learn a thing or two along the way as we mentor others. Reflection and conversation often lead to improved efficiency, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of our own work.

When you work with students, you may be struck by how different their backgrounds seem from yours. Such differences don't have to be a barrier to a successful mentor-mentee relationship. As demonstrated in the webinar series, *Blueprints of an Enclosure Career* (<https://iibec.org/emerging-professionals>), produced by IIBEC's Emerging Professionals Committee, no two career paths are the same, but we are all driven by the same interest in the building enclosure industry. The students working with us are lucky to have found this incredible profession. Let's do our part to help set them up for a lifetime of success.

On another note, I want to close with a quick thank you to all the members who actively participated in IIBEC's bylaws amendment process in April and May. Thank you for taking the time to review the proposed changes, provide your feedback, and ultimately, vote. Your voices continue to help make IIBEC stronger.

Have a great summer!

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