

Meeting Needs and Growing Potential

New ACI Foundation programs help to carry on its legacy of industry support

BY CLAUDE BÉDARD, DEBRETHANN ORSAK, AND JOSEPH SANDERS

If you're reading this, you're undoubtedly aware of ACI and its numerous technical committees. You may also be aware of the ACI Foundation, but you may not know how it relates to ACI and its activities.

Briefly put, the ACI Foundation is a wholly-owned, nonprofit subsidiary of ACI, designed to assist ACI in fulfilling its mission to find and share the best ways to advance concrete knowledge. The Foundation provides oversight to three separate councils: the Strategic Development Council (SDC), the Scholarship Council (SC), and the Concrete Research Council (CRC). As the current chairs of those respective councils, we're pleased to provide the following overview of the Foundation's structure and initiatives. In the process, we hope you'll see how it has been and will continue to be ACI's link to the future.

STRUCTURE

The Foundation's predecessor, the Concrete Research and Education Foundation (ConREF), was formed by the ACI Board of Direction in 1989 to provide ACI with a mechanism to seek funds to support education and research activities and to provide governance of its associated councils, including the SDC, SC, and CRC. In December 2000, ConREF held a planning session and formally restated its mission as: "ConREF will advance the concrete industry through planning and attracting human and financial resources to support research and scholarship in concrete design, materials, and construction and facilitate timely applications of technology into practice." Shortly thereafter, then-ACI President James Jirsa praised the new mission, stating, "The development of new knowledge and the development of people who are prepared to participate in and advance concrete technology are perhaps the most important activities

we can undertake to assure that concrete technology does not stagnate."¹

Even so, debate continued regarding the structure and mission of ConREF, and a few years later the ACI Board challenged the foundation to justify its existence. Jirsa then undertook a major evaluation of ConREF that culminated in its reorganization in 2006 as the ACI Foundation. The new name was selected to reinforce its association with ACI and reflect its diverse activities.

The function of the ACI Foundation was also more explicitly defined and expanded. It now has the purpose to receive, administer, and expend funds for educational, research, scientific, and charitable purposes, to increase knowledge and understanding of concrete materials, and to support programs that improve concrete design and construction. Further, the Foundation may support programs that have applicability to other materials and their design and construction as long as a substantial part of the program relates to concrete. In carrying out this purpose, the Foundation will:

- Identify, support, and encourage basic and applied research on materials, design, construction, and applications;
- Report and disseminate research results;
- Support programs that facilitate the interaction between practitioners, educators, researchers, decision-makers, and the public;
- Establish fellowships and scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students with interest in any concrete-related field; and
- Support other special projects of the Institute that cannot be undertaken by ACI using its regular budgeted financial resources.

Leadership

The Foundation's leadership structure consists of seven individuals who have clear associations with ACI and the various councils:

- ACI's Executive Vice President (currently William R. Tolley) serves as the Foundation's President;
- ACI's Managing Director of Finance and Administration (currently Donna G. Halstead) serves as the Foundation's Treasurer;
- ACI's Vice Presidents (currently Florian G. Barth and Richard D. Stehly) serve as Trustees of the Foundation; and
- The Chairs of each of the Foundation's three councils (currently the three of us) also serve as Trustees of the ACI Foundation.

The ACI Foundation trustees meet twice a year, during ACI conventions, to discuss ongoing projects and initiatives under the Foundation's guidance.

Support

Sources of support and general descriptions of some of the Foundation's activities are shown in Fig. 1.

In the past, the ACI Foundation has been supported primarily by donations from ACI members and their companies. The ACI Board has recently approved two new initiatives, however, that are expected to lead to significant growth in the Foundation's activities. The first program is a \$3-million endowment from ACI to the Foundation. Half of the investment earnings from this endowment are to be shared equally by SDC, SC, CRC, and the ACI Foundation itself and are to supplement other funds obtained by each. Councils have the option of accumulating earnings from the endowment, and the ACI Board has reserved the right to recall the original endowment if necessary.

The second new program, the Concrete Legacy Society, allows an ACI member (or anyone with an interest in concrete) to name ACI or the ACI Foundation in his or her will or trust. Bequests made through the Concrete Legacy Society will help facilitate concrete technology advancement of the donor's choosing by funding current projects, research, industry collaboration, or student scholarships and fellowships. The new ACI Foundation Web site, www.ACIFoundation.org, outlines different ways to give and how to plan accordingly. If you are interested in donating to or naming the ACI Foundation in your will or trust, please visit the Web site or call (248) 848-3778 for additional information regarding the Concrete Legacy Society.

Councils

As indicated previously, the foundation oversees three councils (Fig. 1).

Concrete Research Council: CRC has the purpose of advancing the knowledge of concrete materials, construction,

and structures through research. In coordination with ACI technical committees, the council solicits and selects research proposals; assists in financing and guiding research; and helps publish results. Traditionally, CRC reviews and grants financial awards up to \$20,000 for each approved research project, and research teams are encouraged to seek additional funding elsewhere. In the past, CRC funding has been used to study crack and leakage control in liquid-containing structures, the static and dynamic moduli of concrete, and formwork pressure and rheology of self-consolidating concrete.

Scholarship Council: SC is dedicated to advancing the future of concrete by granting financial awards each year to students interested in pursuing a career in concrete and concrete construction. Every year, during ACI's spring convention, faculty-recommended undergraduate and graduate students receive fellowships ranging from \$7000 to \$10,000 to assist with tuition, housing, books, and educational materials. Each student receives a stipend toward travel to two ACI conventions



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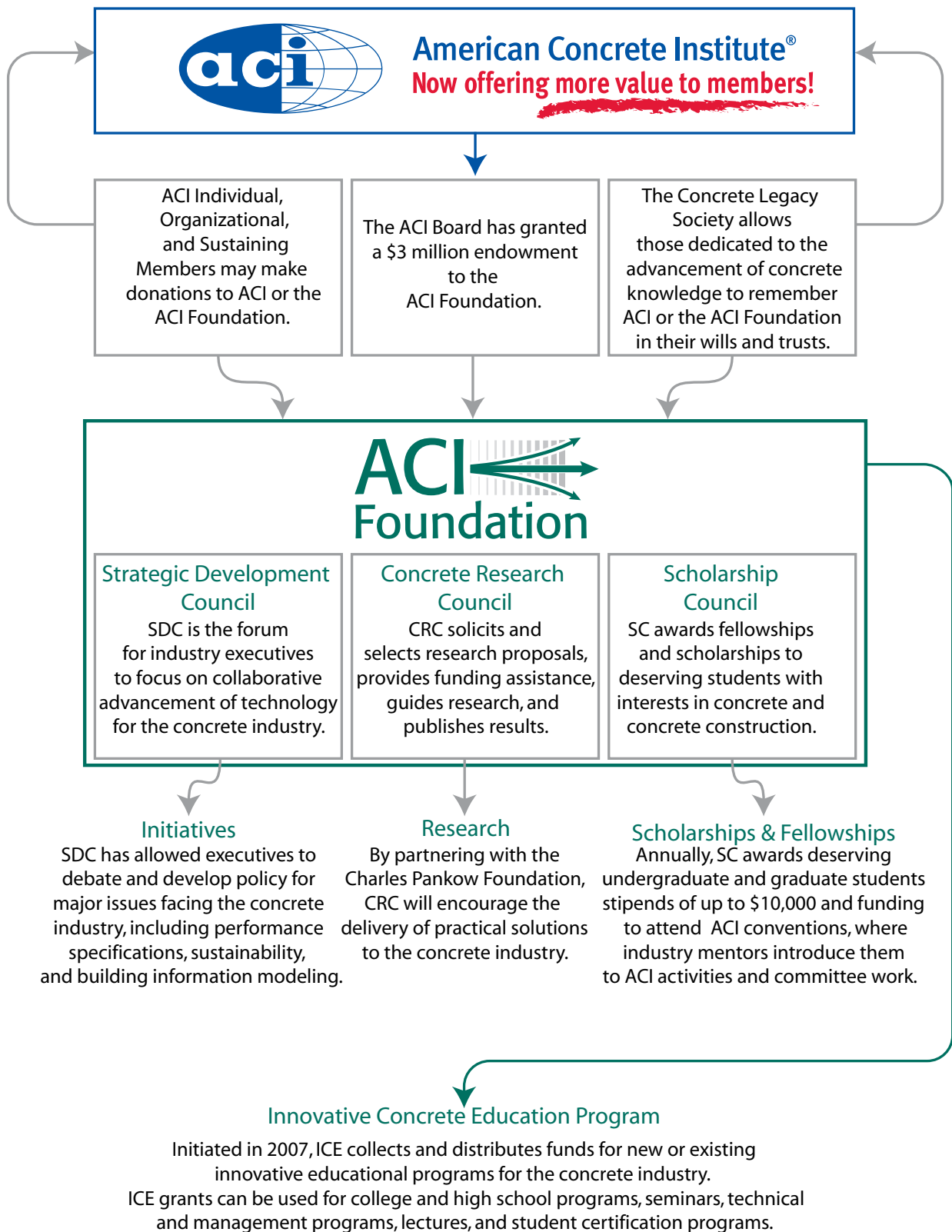


Fig. 1: The diverse funding sources for the ACI Foundation will help ensure that it can support the ongoing activities of its councils as well as the new Innovative Concrete Education Program

where they are guided by an industry mentor. Each student is also provided the option of accepting a summer internship.

The student fellowship program continues to grow, with four fellowships awarded for the 2008-09 academic year, eight fellowships available for the 2009-10 academic year, and 10 fellowships projected to be available for the 2010-11 academic year. In addition, graduate scholarships are available. The Scholarship Council awarded six \$3000 scholarships this year to graduate students pursuing an education in the concrete field.

Strategic Development Council: SDC serves as an executive forum for collaborative concrete problem-solving and research. The organization brings together key stakeholders in the concrete industry, with representatives from government, academia, and customers, to focus on collaborative problem-solving and meaningful technology advancement. Its overall goal is to continue its role as an industry leader in facilitating the movement of meaningful concrete innovations into commercial use.

SDC has its own Web site, providing descriptions of past and upcoming meetings, past projects, and key contact information. The site may be accessed via a link at the Foundation Web site or directly at www.ConcreteSDC.org.

Industry Cooperation

Earlier this year, the ACI Foundation and the Charles Pankow Foundation (www.pankowfoundation.org) signed a 3-year agreement that would allow more frequent and substantial funding for ACI Foundation-recommended research projects.² Under this agreement, the ACI Foundation will identify and recommend research projects to the Pankow Foundation for review and potential funding. Research teams who believe their project would result in the advancement of technologies and practices within the concrete industry are encouraged to apply for funding through the partnership. Information on requirements and procedures can be found by visiting www.ACIFoundation.org.

In 2007, the foundation developed the Innovative Concrete Education (ICE) Program to collect and distribute funds for new or ongoing innovative concrete-related educational programs. The ICE Program was created with the goal of encouraging awareness of job opportunities within the concrete industry as well as providing assistance toward that training. ICE grants can be used to support technical and management training programs by providing financial assistance for the purchase of capital equipment, construction materials, or textbooks. Grants can also be used to pay expenses for distance learning programs, including Web-based seminars, traveling lecturers, or student certification programs.

DYNAMIC SUPPORT

We believe that the recent partnership with the Charles Pankow Foundation, as well as the development of the Concrete Legacy Society and the Innovative Concrete Education Program, are clear signs that the ACI Foundation will be a dynamic force driving the future of concrete. Please visit the Foundation Web site to find out how you can participate.

References

1. Jirsa, J.O., "Thank You for a Wonderful Year," *Concrete International*, V. 23, No. 3, Mar. 2001, p. 7.
2. Sanders, J., and Bédard, C., "Delivering Practical Solutions to the Concrete Industry," *Concrete International*, V. 30, No. 7, July 2008, pp. 27-29.



Claude Bédard is the Vice President and General Manager of the North American Admixtures Division of The Euclid Chemical Company in St. Hubert, QC, Canada. He also serves as the Chair of both the ACI Foundation and the Strategic Development Council. Recently elected as a new member of ACI's Board of Direction, Bédard is an ACI Fellow and has twice served as President of

the ACI Quebec and Eastern Ontario Chapter. In addition, he serves on several ACI committees and the ACI Financial Advisory Committee.



Debrethann Orsak is a Principal of Cagley & Associates, Inc., Rockville, MD, and currently serves as the Vice Chair of the ACI Foundation and the Chair of the Scholarship Council. She is an ACI Fellow and a member of ACI's Convention Committee, Fellows Nomination Committee, Financial Advisory Committee, and the Student Activities Committee. She is also a

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Structures, and the ACI Innovation Task Group 6 (ITG-6) on High-Strength Steel Reinforcement.