

## WAAIME Chair Column:

# Preparing for another banner year

I am honored to again get to chair the WAAIME Division of SME. I was fortunate to be chair in 2016-17 when WAAIME, established in 1917, celebrated 100 years of support to education and other good causes in the extractive industries. While it will be hard to top that 100-year celebration this year, I am challenged to make this yet another banner year for WAAIME.

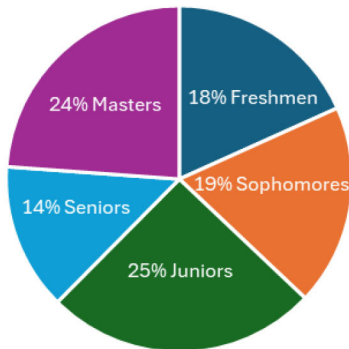


**Barb Filas**  
2025 WAAIME Chair

In the May 2016 Newsletter, I wrote an article about where WAAIME stood eight years after its merger with SME in 2008. I tiered off three familiar phrases that, for many reasons, are still just as relevant today as they were nearly two decades ago.

### WAAIME Scholarships

Our flagship scholarship program is the epitome of my first phrase: “If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it.” Needing only a few tweaks now and then to keep current with the times, our scholarship program remains the largest and best



managed program in the industry. This year, we will award \$365,000 in scholarships to 197 students at 18 universities in the United States. Our international sections awarded \$72,082 in scholarships to 55 students at 16 universities in 2024 and also held seven

coaching workshops and 240 coaching sessions in Peru, Chile and Mexico. All scholarship recipients are members of AIST, TMS, SPE, or SME, as required by our scholarship eligibility criteria.

This process would not have been possible without the dedication and professionalism of our volunteer interview teams. Our United States review team, comprising Beth Price, Blanche Blattner, Carol Trutt, Susan Harwood, Diane Lightwood, Elizabeth Zbinden, Gillian Worsey, Jean Davin, Karen Jass, Kelli McCormick, Kitty Konalis, Line-Audrey Nkule, Margie Mansanti, Pamela Swendseid, Rachel Micander, and Winnell Burt put in outstanding efforts. Each application was reviewed at least three times to ensure fairness and consistency.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated, and especially to Lydia Hull and Susana Palomino, who led the teams as our Scholarship and International Chairs. Thank you all for your unwavering commitment to supporting the next generation of leaders in our industry. Our scholarship program is one that does not need fixing.

### Fixing what was broken

For decades, WAAIME has looked for ways to grow its membership and ensure sustainability. I recall a 2012 strategic planning session where bold ideas were proposed, but some members found them too unconventional. In the May 2016 Newsletter, I emphasized that sustainability required both structure and a strong membership—to support extractive industry students and provide value to SME. We also needed to change the restrictive 2008 Merger Agreement with SME. The EC introduced new programs like the Mining in Society Merit Badge and sponsoring a PhD student under the SME Foundation, but the core issue—the flawed Merger Agreement—remained. Then COVID hit, and progress stalled.

As I said in 2016, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome.” Fifteen years after the merger, it was time for change. Thanks to the EC and especially Margie Mansanti, the SME Board approved the Omnibus Agreement in 2023 (May 2023 Newsletter). This replaced the restrictive parts of the Merger Agreement. When we announced it at the Women of SME Breakfast, membership took action (May 2023 Newsletter). This momentum launched a new strategic planning effort (November 2023 and May 2024 Newsletters), and we now have a clear vision and set of strategic goals to guide all future actions.

### THE WAAIME DIVISION OF SME

OUR VISION
Investing in students of all ages to help solve the workforce challenges of the extractive industries

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS
<p><b>Elevate awareness</b> by introducing students to extractive industry careers</p> <p><b>Provide essential services</b> by offering scholarships and other valuable programs that attract new students into the industry</p> <p><b>Grow relationships</b> by partnering with industry, universities, and others while avoiding duplicating efforts in meeting the industry's workforce demands</p> <p><b>Operate sustainably</b> by having adequate resources to support our efforts</p>

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## Zenovia Kunasz receives 2024 WAAIME Founders Award

by Barb Filas

Margie Mansani (2024 WAAIME Chair) presented the 2024 WAAIME Founders Award to Zenovia (Zenia) Kunasz (December 2024 Newsletter) at the Women of SME Breakfast on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025. Her citation reads “Since 1988, Zenia has been a consistent and devoted supporter of WAAIME, particularly through her generous contributions of handmade jewelry, which has raised thousands of dollars for a student emergency fund over the past eight years. This fund aids students in need, providing financial support for emergencies that scholarships don’t cover. Her service to WAAIME and the larger mining community is immeasurable. Zenia’s warmth, dedication, and boundless enthusiasm for helping others make her a truly deserving recipient of the 2024 WAAIME Founders Award”.



### Founders Award – Call for Nominations

The Founder’s Award was established in 2014 to recognize exemplary service to WAAIME and its goals. It recognizes an individual who has contributed significantly to WAAIME through a local section and/or committee, by furthering the goals and purposes established in WAAIME’s incorporation, or by advancing the Vision and Strategic Goals of the SME WAAIME Division. Founder’s Award recipients need not be WAAIME members if they meet the abovementioned recognition criteria.

Past Recipients of the Founders Award include:

2024 – Zenovia Kunasz  
2023 – Blanche Blattner  
2022 – Patricia McWhorter  
2021 – Daphne D. LaPointe  
2020 – Eugenia Lomelín  
2019 – Lydia M. Hull  
2018 – Elisabeth M. Price  
2017 – Winnell Burt  
2016 – Jean Davin  
2015 – Veronica Yovane Brahm  
2014 – Bonnie McMorris

Nominate someone to receive the Founders Award. Please send 1) a single-page nomination letter stating your knowledge of and relationship to the nominee, 2) a brief bio of the nominee’s specific contributions to a local WAAIME section and/or committee, or to furthering WAAIME’s Vision and Strategic Goals, and 3) a photo of the nominee. All nominations must be submitted by July 1.

The 2025 nominations will be processed with deadlines as follows:

- July 1 - Nominations must be submitted to SME Headquarters (via email: [waaime@smenet.org](mailto:waaime@smenet.org) or via mail: SME c/o WAAIME Staff Liaison, 12999 E Adam

**WAAIME Executive Committee and Founders Award Recipient, L to R: Margie Mansanti, Zenia Kunasz, Ihor Kunasz, Barbara Filas, Lydia Hull, Susana Palomino**

- Aircraft Circle, Englewood, CO 80112).
- July 15 - Complete nominations are forwarded by SME to the Executive Committee.
- September 13 - Voting is completed during the Executive Committee meeting at the WAAIME Mid-Year Meeting.
- October 31 - The Award recipient is notified as soon as possible, but no later than the end of October.
- February 24 - The Award is presented at the 2026 MINEXCHANGE SME Annual Conference & Expo.

The Founder’s Award is given annually. The Executive Committee is not obliged to give the Award annually if a deserving recipient is not nominated. All Founder’s Award nominations are considered active for a three-year period.

### Executive Committee – Call for nominations

The executive committee is responsible for, but not limited to, all WAAIME Division governance, maintaining alignment with the Division’s Vision and Strategic Goals, guiding and supporting committee activities, identifying and/or assessing new ideas and opportunities for programs and partnerships. The executive committee has overall fiduciary responsibility for the WAAIME investment portfolio.

The executive committee comprises a past chair, chair, vice chair, scholarship chair and international chair. The past chair, chair and vice chair are a three-year advancing commitment. The scholarship and international chair positions are both three-year terms. The scholarship chair oversees the scholarship program in the United States. The international chair oversees the local international sections and their scholarship programs. All members of the executive committee

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# Oh, What a Night!

## WAAIME Student Reception at MINEXCHANGE 2025

By Margaret Mansanti, WAAIME Past Chair

The WAAIME Division Student Reception, held Monday, Feb. 24, 2025, at the Hyatt Centennial Ballroom in Denver, CO brought the mining community together for an evening full of energy, excitement, and unforgettable connections.

Held during SME's MINEXCHANGE 2025 Annual Conference, the reception drew a record-breaking crowd — more than 320 students and industry professionals filled the room, making it the largest and most lively WAAIME Student Reception to date.

From the moment the doors opened, the room buzzed with conversation and laughter as students mixed and mingled with industry leaders, future colleagues and new friends. Games, raffles, and the ever-popular selfie-tag contest added to the fun, and 21 lucky winners walked away with Amazon gift cards.

But beyond the games and giveaways, the night was all about building bridges between students and professionals. In the crowd were SME Executive Director David Kanagy and an impressive lineup of SME past, present, and future Presidents: Ihor Kunasz (1998) joined by his wife, Zenia Kunasz, this year's WAAIME Founder's Award recipient; Barbara Filas (2005); John Mansanti (2017); Barbara Arnold (2018); Marc LeVier (2023); Marc Herpfer (2024) and Bill Hancock (2025). Their presence and conversations throughout the night highlighted the welcoming spirit of the mining industry.

Of course, a night this successful doesn't happen by accident. Thoughtful planning and teamwork from dedicated staff at SME including WAAIME staff liaison Rachel Grimes, Laura Nelson and the SME meetings team — led by Cori



**WAAIME Student Reception at the SME Annual Conference February 2025**

Knasinski and meeting planner extraordinaire Hannah Harriman ensured a fun, festive, and welcoming atmosphere.

The success of the reception was further strengthened by generous industry support. With sponsorship secured for the second year in a row through the efforts of incoming WAAIME Chair Barbara Filas and Emma Li Salditt.

A special thanks to our sponsors Gold Sponsors: NewFields and Paterson & Cooke USA and Silver Sponsors: Hecla Mining Company, Brooks & Nelson, Energy Fuels Inc., Orla Mining Ltd., Knight Piesold and Co., NexGen Resource Corporation, and RWI Enhanced Evaporation ■

## Founders Award

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are officers of the WAAIME Division. Both the scholarship chair and international chair will complete their current three-year terms in February.

Responsibilities, time and travel commitments, and other useful information on each executive committee position and to understand how WAAIME works overall is included in the WAAIME Operations Handbook.

Nominate someone for an open position on the executive committee. The executive committee is currently seeking nominations for the vice chair, scholarship chair and international committee chair positions. Please send 1) a single-page nomination letter stating your knowledge of and relationship to the nominee, 2) a brief bio of the nominee's specific contributions to WAAIME and specifically to the scholarship or international committee, and 3) a photo of the nominee. All nominations must be submitted by November 30.

Each nomination will be processed with deadlines as follows:

- November 30 - Nominations must be submitted to SME Headquarters (via email: [waaime@smenet.org](mailto:waaime@smenet.org)

or via mail: SME c/o WAAIME Staff Liaison, 12999 E Adam Aircraft Circle, Englewood, CO 80112).

- December 1 - Complete nominations are forwarded by SME to the Executive Committee.
- December 15 - The Executive Committee will select the new Scholarship Chair and International Committee Chair based on their qualifications and the information provided. The WAAIME Chair will notify SME of their selections.
- December 19 - The WAAIME Chair will confirm the selected nominees' willingness to serve and request the individual's full participation at the 2026 MINEXCHANGE SME Annual Conference & Exhibit.
- February 22 - The selected nominees' will join the Executive Committee at the 2026 MINEXCHANGE SME Annual Conference & Exhibit.

The executive committee is not obliged to fill a position if the nominations received either are incomplete or the nominee is not qualified for the position. In these events, the procedure for filling vacancies on the executive committee described in the WAAIME Operations Handbook will be followed. ■





# WAAIME News

## Chair Column

(Continued from page 1)

### Going forward

Under the new vision and strategic goals, I come to my favorite phrase: “Just do it!” When someone comes up with a great new idea that aligns with our Vision and Strategic Goals, we need to go after it. For 2025, I look forward to furthering three new initiatives that we alluded to last year and I look forward to more awesome ideas coming from you when attending a WAAIME meeting, by email ([waaime@smenet.org](mailto:waaime@smenet.org)), or by posting on our LinkedIn page.

**WAAIME’s LinkedIn Page** WAAIME launched its official U.S. LinkedIn page in December 2024, marking a major step forward in expanding our digital presence and engaging with the broader extractive industries community.

Special thanks go to Allison Coppel, Jackie Herrera, and Rachel Grimes for leading this initiative and ensuring its continued success. This initiative supports WAAIME’s mission to:

- Invest in students of all ages
- Elevate awareness
- Provide essential services
- Grow relationships
- Operate sustainably

By Margaret Mansanti R.D. • 4/21/2025



WAAIME was proud to once again host the Selfie Tag Contest during MineXchange 2025 – marking the seventh year of this student favorite tradition. The contest offers students a unique and engaging way to interact with ...more



While our International Sections have had LinkedIn pages for some time, the launch of the U.S. page brings WAAIME fully into the 21st century. LinkedIn, the world’s largest professional network, offers a powerful platform to share news, organize volunteer efforts, and strengthen professional connections across the industry.

Follow us and join the conversation as we continue to grow and support the future of mining.

**Careers That Rock!** launched in February after the concept was successfully demonstrated through WAAIME partnerships with Montana Technological University and Pennsylvania State University in 2024. It is an initiative to encourage universities offering extractive industry

degrees to reach out to secondary school students and inform them about the exciting careers available in the industry. These university-led efforts introduce

students to industry opportunities while allowing them to make informed decisions about their academic futures. By declaring relevant majors earlier, students can also benefit from WAAIME scholarships and become part of our industry’s unique and tight-knit international community. In April, the EC approved grants to Montana Technological University, Pennsylvania State University, West Virginia University, University of Utah and Missouri University of Science & Technology totaling \$30,900 for 2025.



**Rebecca Bweupe-Siwale Memorial Scholarship** was established in September 2024 (December 2024



(l to r) Susana Palomino, Margaret Mansanti, Lydia Hull, Barb Filas and Rebecca Bweupe-Siwale at the MINEXCHANGE 2024 SME Annual Conference & Expo.

Newsletter). At MINEXCHANGE SME 2025 Annual Conference & Expo in February, WAAIME raised seed money for this new fund and thanks to Executive Director Dave Kanagy, SME generously agreed to match the amount raised during that meeting. Going forward, the EC plans to add to this seed money and endow the scholarship so that Rebecca’s contribution to the industry, to SME, and to WAAIME is never forgotten.

These are truly exciting times for WAAIME. We have a strategic focus, we are growing in membership, and we are getting younger people involved. With all our help, this next generation of leadership will assure WAAIME another 100 years and beyond investing in students to help solve the workforce challenges of the extractive industries. ■

## WAAIME's popular selfie tag contest marks another successful year at MINEXCHANGE 2025

by Margaret Mansanti, past chair

WAAIME's highly popular Selfie Tag contest returned for its seventh year at the 2025 MINEXCHANGE SME Annual Conference & Expo in Denver, CO. This year brought a new face to the planning team, with Amy Richins stepping in to help coordinate the event for the first time, working alongside executive committee members Jackie Herrera and Lydia Hull.

WAAIME liaison Rachel Grimes collaborated with SME Exhibits Specialist Justin Courtney to recruit 10 new participating companies. Each company submitted creative clues about their organization and donated \$100 or more to help offset the cost of prizes.

The Selfie Tag contest continues to be a win-win: companies enjoy the chance to engage directly with students, and students get to explore a variety of businesses connected to mining in a fun, interactive way.

Winners were announced as one of the highlights of the WAAIME Student Reception on February 24, with Amy Richins revealing the final results. The top team, The Tommyknockers from Virginia Tech, clinched first place, walking away with a cool \$500 cash prize. Second place went to ZoReNa from New Mexico, whose creativity

earned them a well-deserved \$300. WAAIME Warriors from Colorado School of Mines snagged third place, taking home \$200, and delighting WAAIME members with their team's name. Finally, in an act of prophetic irony, fourth place went to Team Fourth Place from Virginia Tech, who won \$100.

A total of 10 teams, composed of 32 enthusiastic students, participated in this year's contest. In addition, all participating students were entered into a raffle for a \$250 Amazon gift card, generously donated by WAAIME member Mary Korpi. Congratulations to Ian Pfeffer, a junior from Montana Tech who was the lucky winner. ■



**First Place Team Tommyknockers from Virginia Tech:** Henry Campsie, Colby McGrady, Nick Galanis, Kaiden Brindle.



**Second Place- Team ZoReNa from New Mexico:** Rebecca Boakye, Zohreh Kazemi Motlagh, Narges Bagheri



**Third place - WAAIME Warriors from Colorado School of Mines** Lanie Smith, Marina Lloyd, Alexandra (Sasha) Stevens (not pictured), Kaitlyn Krieger (not pictured)





## International news;

# Updates from international sections

## Chile Santiago

by **Fabiola Villablanca**

The Santiago section had meetings to define the strategy for the end of 2025 and is preparing for the call for scholarships in 2026. The section is very satisfied since two coaching workshops were held in recent months.



They shared that most of the scholarship recipients who completed their studies in December 2024 have already started their professional internships and are preparing their thesis.

At the end of 2024, a coaching workshop was held at the Institute of Mining Engineers of Chile in which the 10 scholarship recipients participated and topics were discussed on how they can prepare for the search for their first job since they were finishing their degree.

On April 26, the second coaching workshop was held at the Institute of Mining Engineers of Chile with the participation of all the scholarship recipients. In this workshop a number of topics were discussed, including:

How to achieve your objectives? How to get feedback from third parties? How to do a self-assessment? How to manage conflicts?

The executive committee is proposing to make improvements to the program to achieve a better selection process and soon will have meetings with Susana Palomino, the international representative to share ideas.

## La Serena

by **Pia Alvarez**

In the La Serena section there are currently five



scholarship recipients.

The members have maintained their activity with monthly meetings and, as is traditional, in the homes of some of them, in order to share and talk about their activities.

## Lima Peru

by **Susana Palomino**

The Lima section maintained a close relationship with all the scholarship recipients, two coaching workshops and five different trainings were carried out with the collaboration of companies in the sector and strategic partners.

On November 24, the XXII Coaching Workshop organized by WAAIME was successfully held at the





Hernandez & cia law firm. This event brought together 15 of our students from Lima, Cajamarca, Arequipa and Huancayo cities, who participated in the development of the theme: “Trust and teamwork in the world of work”.

The workshop allowed each participant to identify their strengths and recognize areas where they can continue to improve, fostering holistic growth, both personally and professionally.

On November 25, Sierra Metals Inc. successfully organized the workshop “Perspectives of a Leader: Lessons from Mining, Leadership and Professional Growth”, by Miguel Aramburú, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the minning company. The event was attended by 10 scholarship recipients from Lima, Cajamarca, Arequipa and Huancayo city , who valued the experience shared by the speaker. Miguel Aramburú highlighted the challenges



of the mining sector and the importance of facing this race with humility, passion and commitment to improve people’s lives and be agents of change.

On March 30, the XXIII Coaching Workshop organized by WAAIME was successfully held at the Institute of Mining Engineers of Peru. This event brought together 15 of our scholarship recipients from 4 different cities who participated in the development of the theme: “Building my personal brand”. During the day, various dynamics were carried out focused on self-analysis, on discovering what are the talents, skills, values, differentiators, reputation of each one, always thinking about continuous improvement, considering personal, academic and professional aspects.

On March 30, Compañía Minera Poderosa S.A., successfully organized four workshops at its facilities for a group of our students:

“The Role of Mining in the Energy Transition”, by Eng. José Estela Ramírez, Superintendent of Energy Projects, described good environmental practices, such as the use of clean and eco-friendly energy, to reduce environmental impact. Subsequently, Eng. Omar Saúl Bendeزú Gutarra, Supervisor of Mine Closure and Environmental Projects, gave the talk “Environment and Community Relations”, explaining the strategies, planning and execution of the mining company’s social projects and how they helped the development of the surrounding populations.

Eng. Ariana Arteaga Pastor, Coordinator of Innovation, explained the topic, “Innovation in Mining”, described the work that is developing through the continuous participation of employees, and fostering collaborative commitment based on strategic solutions. Finally,



Eng. Efraín Omar Alva Villacorta, presented the topic “Community Relations”, detailed the strategies and actions that seek to strengthen the ties between Poderosa Mining Company and the community, explaining about the non-profit Association “Pataz”.

On March 31, a workshop was held for our recipients: “Is leadership born or made?”, by Engineer Peter Hartmann, president of the Board of Directors of Lubricación y Tecnología SAC, who gave a talk based on his personal and professional experience, for the advice full of values and principles, for highlighting the characteristics that a person must have to be a business leader and for highlighting the importance of work in the personal brand; so that our students can aspire to become leaders in the extractive sector in the future.

## Mexico - Torreon

by Rocio Hermosillo

The WAAIME Mexico Torreon continued with:

- Nine scholarship recipients.
- Two from Universidad Durango
- Three of ULSA
- Three from Tecnológico de la Laguna.

Residencies were obtained for four scholarship recipients.



On February 15, the conference “Mining of Talents” was given in person by Lic. Abraham Silva, Divisional Manager of RH Minas Peñoles. We had the assistance of our nine scholarship recipients and one former scholarship recipient.

### Education for tomorrow

We have started with the call for our annual contest “Education for Tomorrow” in which high school students from non-bilingual schools are invited to participate to write an essay in English about an element that is



extracted as a product of mining, in which the student investigate how it is extracted, where the largest deposits are located, their main uses, as well as the impact on our lives (economic, technological, social, etc.), this with the aim that they can see the importance of mining and interest them in the study of Earth Sciences.

This year the element to be investigated is “Neodymium” And the three best works will be awarded.

The board of directors and members shared a nice meeting in April.

### Mexico DF

The board of directors of the Federal District section had several coordination meetings to share and make decisions about the scholarship program, training programs with the scholarship recipients and the incorporation of new members. ■