

Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration Inc.

Mineral & Metallurgical Processing Division
Hyatt Regency, Denver, CO: Centennial F
February 23, 2025, 9:00-11:30 am
Denver, CO

Meeting Minutes
Submitted March 1, 2025

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Mineral & Metallurgical Division (MPD) of the SME was called to order at 9:02 am on February 23, 2025, in Denver, CO by Jaeheon Lee.

Present:

Jaeheon Lee, Chair – Present
Dave Meadows, Past Chair – Present
Tarun Bhambhani, Associate Chair – Present
Aaron Noble, First Vice Chair – Present
Kimberly Mills, Second Vice Chair – Present
Nick Gow, Secretary-Treasurer – Present
Jim Wickens, Technical Program Associate – Present
Adam House, Membership Associate – Present
Chee Theng, SME Liaison – Present

Guests:

Sumedh Gostu, Fangyu Liu, Michael Spicher, Rino Guajardo, Raghav Dube, Thom Seal, Jordan Rutledge, Scott Shuey, Lei Pan, Pengbo Chu, Jayson Ripke, Nickey Powell, Mohammad Rezaee, Weston Hartzell, Mike Moats, Katy McDowell, Tim Myers, Thomas Stauder, Triveni Gangadari, Chandima Subasinghe, Joelson Alves, Younes Shekarian, Mohsen Rabbani, Jim Metsa, Garland Davis, Zach Zanetell

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

C. Safety Share

Adam House reminded the group about nighttime safety around downtown Denver, especially away from the Convention Center.

Mike Spicher added an additional safety share about the Green River, WY potential tunnel failure, and always being aware of escape routes.

D. Open Issues

1. Programming

The MPD technical program for the MINEXCHANGE 2025 SME Annual Conference & Expo in Denver, CO includes 21 sessions, including the sessions for the Symposium in Honor of Professor Komar Kawatra, organized by Jayson Ripke. The Monday afternoon plenary session will include lectures by the division's major award recipients, and a certificate presentation to the Rong Yu Wan Ph.D. Scholarship Award recipient.

World Gold 2025, organized by Nick Gow and Tom Rauch, was co-located with MINEXCHANGE 2025. The program consisted of 1 additional short course, hosted by Jaeheon Lee, and 37 submissions covering all aspects of gold processing.

The MPD technical program for MINEXCHANGE 2026 in Salt Lake City, UT will be led by Aaron Noble. All attendees were encouraged to attend the MPD Unit Committee Meeting in the afternoon to discuss session topics and special session ideas. Aaron Noble and Kim Mills will attend the 2026 Programming Meeting later this week. Adam House discussed that Responsible Mining and Underground Construction is scheduled for the 2026 programming, with MPD likely contributing one session.

2. Social Functions and Fundraisers

The MPD Scotch Nightcap will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. The event raised \$36,500 from three title sponsors and four supporting sponsors. The Bass Metals band will once again perform, and Secretary-Treasurer Nick Gow will serve as the host. Tickets sold out at 450, with more tickets to be made available at the door. Sales revenue will be determined after the annual meeting. Whiskey glasses, designed by Jim Wickens and sponsored by Molycop, and T-shirts featuring the Bass Metals, designed by Adam House, will be sold at the event for additional fundraising.

Based on the success of last year, an ad hoc planning committee led by Dave Meadows, MPD Past Chair, held periodic meetings with SME staff in the months leading up to the date to ensure the event ran smoothly.

The speaker for the MPD Luncheon is Mike Blois who will discuss “The Application of Contingency in the Development of New Technologies.”

The 2025-2026 MPD Calendar was distributed to all registered attendees of MINEXCHANGE 2025. Eight sponsors were secured in addition for a total of \$17,700.

3. Awards

The committee recognized this year’s award recipients:

Antoine M. Gaudin Award – Zhenghe Xu
Robert H. Richards Award – Jaisen Kohmuench
Milton E. Wadsworth Award – Michael L. Free
Arthur F. Taggart Awards – Naci Duru and Carl C. Nesbitt
MPD Outstanding Young Engineer Award – Jordan Rutledge
Mill Gentleman of Distinction Award – Jaeheon Lee
Frank F. Aplan Award (shared with Coal & Energy Division of SME) – Jack Groppo
James Douglas Gold Medal Award (shared with TMS) – Kathleen A. Altman
Fred C. Bond Award (inaugural) – Kaveh Asgari

This year, the MPD Outstanding Young Engineer award was renamed in recognition of Raj Rajamani, honoring the significant contributions he had made in engineering education.

The Fred C. Bond Commemorative Award is a new MPD award this year, managed by the Comminution Unit Committee.

The committee reminded attendees that the SME Awards Dinner has been replaced this year with a new format to be more of a social event to congratulate the award recipients on Wednesday evening.

Following last year’s SME MINEXCHANGE, the MPD Program Committee also selected and recognized the best presentations from each of the Unit Committees. The Best Presentation Awards were given to:

- Flotation Unit Committee: Brian Cook for “A Study on the Process Development of Fluorspar Flotation from the Zeerus Fluorspar Deposit”
- Comminution Unit Committee: Alex Doll for “Secrets of the Bond Ball Mill Grindability Test”
- Plant Design Committee: Eldwin Huls for “Tech QB2 Project Design”
- Physical Separations Committee: Kelly Nunes for “Additives for Magnetic Separation of Iron Ore Ultrafines”

- Chemical Processing Unit Committee: Naci Duru for “Thermochemical Model Comparison of Gold Sulfide Ore, Copper and Molybdenum Flotation Concentrate Pressure Oxidation Processes”

4. Scholarships

The following MPD scholarships were awarded this year for a total of \$22,500:

Outstanding Senior, Richard Klimpel Memorial Scholarship of \$7,500 to Kathleen Troy of Virginia Tech

Outstanding Graduate Scholarship of \$4,000 to Chandima Subasinghe of the Pennsylvania State University

Outstanding Junior Scholarship of \$4,000 to Khushi Barnwal of the Indian Institute of Technology

Graduate Student Scholarship of \$2,000 to Paula Gallego of West Virginia University

Undergraduate Student Scholarship of \$1,500 to Andrea Oviatt of the University of Nevada, Reno

Undergraduate Student Scholarship of \$1,500 to Ellah Olson of the University of Nevada, Reno

Rong Yu Wan Ph.D. Dissertation Scholarship Award of \$2,000 to Dr. Mohit Gupta of Virginia Tech

5. MPD Committees

The MPD Nominating Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 4, after MINEXCHANGE 2025.

The MPD Unit Committee will meet on the afternoon of February 23, 2025. There are still questions arising from people who are new to the division on how to get involved so the committee discussed sending an email in advance of the meeting to announce the purpose of the Unit Committee Meeting and to remind everyone of the time and place. It was also discussed that Session Chairs should be reminded that they need to immediately discuss any changes in travel plans with the Unit Committee Chair to ensure replacements can be found immediately.

6. Fine Grind

The Fine Grind article schedule this year filled quickly with a number of monthly submissions seeing continued submissions such as the Colorado and Nevada MPD meeting recaps and a review of the Metallic Student Design Competition.

The editorial responsibilities for next year will be handed over to the incoming Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Wickens, starting with the article for submission on March 1, 2025.

7. Member Engagement

The MPD Volunteer Interest Online Form was used this year to coordinate focused communication with the leads of the interest areas and new volunteers. Most submissions tend to come after MINEXCHANGE and after the MPD Coffee Break that was held in December.

The MPD Coffee Break was held virtually by members of the Executive Committee to discuss how to get involved in the division and its benefits. A “Best Mug” competition was held. Elizabeth Toledo, a student at UNMSM, was the winner with a homemade SME mug. She received a Starbucks gift card.

8. Student Engagement

The Student Poster Contest was led by Michael Spicher and will feature 37 accepted posters consisting of three undergraduate and 34 graduate students. The committee reminded everyone to attend the poster session on Wednesday morning and to encourage the students. Adam House, Jordan Rutledge and Hanna Spicher served as judges. The committee is utilizing a new structure this year, narrowing the initial submissions to a top tier, who will be asked to present more in depth, during Wednesday morning’s session. Winners will be announced during the MPD Luncheon that afternoon, and all student participants are provided with a complimentary luncheon ticket.

Aaron Noble discussed plans for an MPD Student Video/Elevator Pitch Contest intended to build a year-long cycle of student engagement to be held in the late summer/early fall as an opportunity to present research work or internship experience. Sumedh Gostu and Fangyu Liu will help to lead the endeavor. The group discussed advertising the contest in a Fine Grind article early in the year prior to internships starting. The Nevada MPD has committed to providing seed money to kick off the contest with sponsors to be considered in the future.

The Metallic Student Design Competition finals consisted of six teams: one from Canada, two from U.S. schools and three from S. America. The team presentations occurred on Sunday morning and the top 3 teams will be announced later this evening. Diana Rodriguez of Newmont, Isabel Penalosa of Rio Tinto, Wendi Cooksey of FLS and Miguel Pugmire of Rio Tinto served as the industry judges.

9. Financial Review

Secretary-Treasurer, Nick Gow, reviewed the division finances which will also be discussed at the Business Meeting after the MPD Luncheon on Wednesday. Division finances are very strong, and all accounts are in good standing due to sponsorship and fundraising efforts over the past years.

10. Other Conferences

Updates were provided on other MPD-affiliated conferences, including:

Extraction 2025/Copper 2025 – Kimberly Mills overall chair, Nick Gow and Adam House SME co-chairs. A total of 463 submissions were received for oral presentations, covering the Copper, Ni/Co and Cross Cutting symposia. The committee has received 376 manuscripts, which are currently being reviewed.

E. New Business

Thom Seal announced that the Heap Leach 2025 conference will take place this year in Reno, NV on October 19-21. Abstracts are currently being accepted.

A special session on Waste Reprocessing held between the MPD and M&E divisions is being planned for MINEXCHANGE 2027.

The committee welcomed the 2025 MPD Young Leader Representatives, Chandima Subasinghe and Mohsen Rabbani.

F. Agenda for Next Meeting

Items to be discussed at the next meeting will include:

Safety Share
2026 SME ACE Programming and Fundraising
2025-2026 Fine Grind Schedule
Scholarships
Other MPD-Affiliated Conferences
Membership and Student Engagement

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 10:22 am by Jaeheon Lee. The next general meeting will be at 2:15 pm on February 25, 2025 in Denver, CO.

Minutes submitted by: Nick Gow

Approved by: Jaeheon Lee