For Immediate Release

ASME Explores Workforce Preparedness Gaps, Honors Leaders in Mechanical Engineering Education at Annual Summit

NEW YORK (April 22, 2025) —The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) convened 150 mechanical engineering chairs, deans, department heads, and faculty members from the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Saudi Arabia for its Mechanical Engineering Education (MEEd) Summit, held March 27-29, at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. The annual conference addresses issues affecting the current and future state of engineering education and brings together educators, industry, government, and ASME representatives to share ideas for effective educational initiatives to prepare students for success post-graduation.

The three-day event kicked off with pre-conference sessions, featuring workshops for new department heads and detailing the engineering accreditation process. The ASME MEEd Summit itself featured an address from Dean Yannis C. Yortsos of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, a MEEd sponsor, and keynote remarks from Erik K. Antonsson, Ph.D., P.E., NAE, founder and chief technology officer of Streetscope, Inc., on "A Mechanical Engineering Career: The Future of Creative Problem Solving." Sessions on "Experiential Learning with Generative AI & eXtended Reality (XR)" and "Building Resilience: Addressing Mental Health in Mechanical Engineering Education" were well attended. Other session topics included: "Industry Partnerships to Enhance Student Success," "Making the PIE Bigger: Collaborative Strategies Between Community Colleges and Universities to Enhance Engineering Enrollment and Student Success," presented by Oscar Barton, Jr., Ph.D., and "Equipping Tomorrow's Engineers: Integrating Sustainability into Engineering Education." Outside sessions, attendees engaged with representatives from exhibitors Ansys, Matrix, Quanser, and VIAS3D, and joined a USC lab/makerspace tour.

The Society also honored several leaders in mechanical engineering education at the MEEd Summit. ASME presented the 2024 Edwin F. Church Medal to Joseph J. Rencis, Ph.D., associate dean of the School of Engineering within the College of Aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Worldwide, "for eminent service to mechanical engineering, the profession, and workforce development, and for educational initiatives that have shaped countless students across various academic levels, from pre-college to university."

Rencis has almost 40 years of experience in higher education and is a national leader in engineering education. A first-generation college graduate, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in architectural and building construction engineering technology from Milwaukee School of Engineering and a master's degree and Ph.D. in civil engineering from Northwestern University and Case Western Reserve University. He has served as a tenured professor of mechanical engineering and director of engineering mechanics at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He was the department head of mechanical engineering at the University of Arkansas and dean of engineering at Tennessee Tech University and Cal Poly Pomona. He has served as interim dean of engineering at the University at Albany, SUNY, and the University of Texas, Permian Basin. Rencis has also served as interim department head of mechanical engineering at

the University of Texas at Dallas. Currently, he is the inaugural associate dean of the School of Engineering within the College of Aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Worldwide. He has made a significant contribution to the field of mechanical engineering by serving as chair and vice-chair of the ASME mechanical engineering department heads committee and president of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE). Rencis is a Fellow of ASME and ASEE, and his research work is in computational solid mechanics and engineering education.

ASME also presented the Donald N. Zwiep Innovation in Education Award to the J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University “for dedication to innovative pedagogical advancements in the mechanical engineering educational process. Their teams used various projects to focus on real-world implications, collaborative processes, and problem solving to further develop teaching methods and increase engagement of both students and faculty.” Guillermo Aguilar, Ph.D., the James and Ada Forsyth Professor and Department Head, accepted the award on behalf of the department.

In addition, ASME presented the Mechanical Engineering Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award to the Department of Mechanical Engineering at The Pennsylvania State University “for its bottom-up approach to inclusivity, with over 95% of faculty actively creating inclusive learning environments.” Tahira Reid Smith, Ph.D., accepted the award on behalf of the department. Reid Smith is the Arthur L. Glenn Professor of Engineering Education, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Design at the Pennsylvania State University, the inaugural Associate Department Head for Inclusive Research and Education in Mechanical Engineering, and the director of the Research in Engineering and Interdisciplinary Design (REID) Laboratory at Penn State, as well as an ASME Fellow.

See below for captioned photos from MEEd 2025.

ASME is thankful for support from its 2025 MEEd Summit planning committee members Orlando Ayala, Jon Cagan, Wei Chen, Harish Cherukuri, Mebougna Drabo, Ahmad Fayad, Pierre Larochelle, Leigh McCue-Weil, Michele Miller, Karim Muci-Kuchler, Rungan Nathan, Paul Ronney, and Yiheng Wang. ASME is also grateful to Summit sponsors USC Viterbi School of Engineering, Ansys, Matrix, Quanser, and VIAS3D, and travel grant sponsor Burroughs Wellcome Fund. Plans are already underway for the 2026 MEEd Summit which will be held at George Mason University in Arlington, Va.

About ASME
ASME helps the global engineering community develop solutions to real world challenges. Founded in 1880 as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, ASME is a not-for-profit professional organization that enables collaboration, knowledge sharing, and skill development across all engineering disciplines, while promoting the vital role of the engineer in society. ASME codes and standards, publications, conferences, continuing education, and professional development programs provide a foundation for advancing technical knowledge and a safer world. In 2020, ASME formed the International Society of Interdisciplinary Engineers (ISIE) II & III LLC, a new for-profit subsidiary to house business ventures that will bring new and innovative products, services, and technologies to the engineering community. For more information, visit www.asme.org.

About the ASME Foundation
The ASME Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, supporting an array of programs in three core pillars: engineering education, career engagement, and global development. With the goal of empowering tomorrow's technical workforce, the ASME Foundation advances equitable access both to professional opportunities and to engineering innovations that improve quality of life. For more information, visit www.asmefoundation.org.

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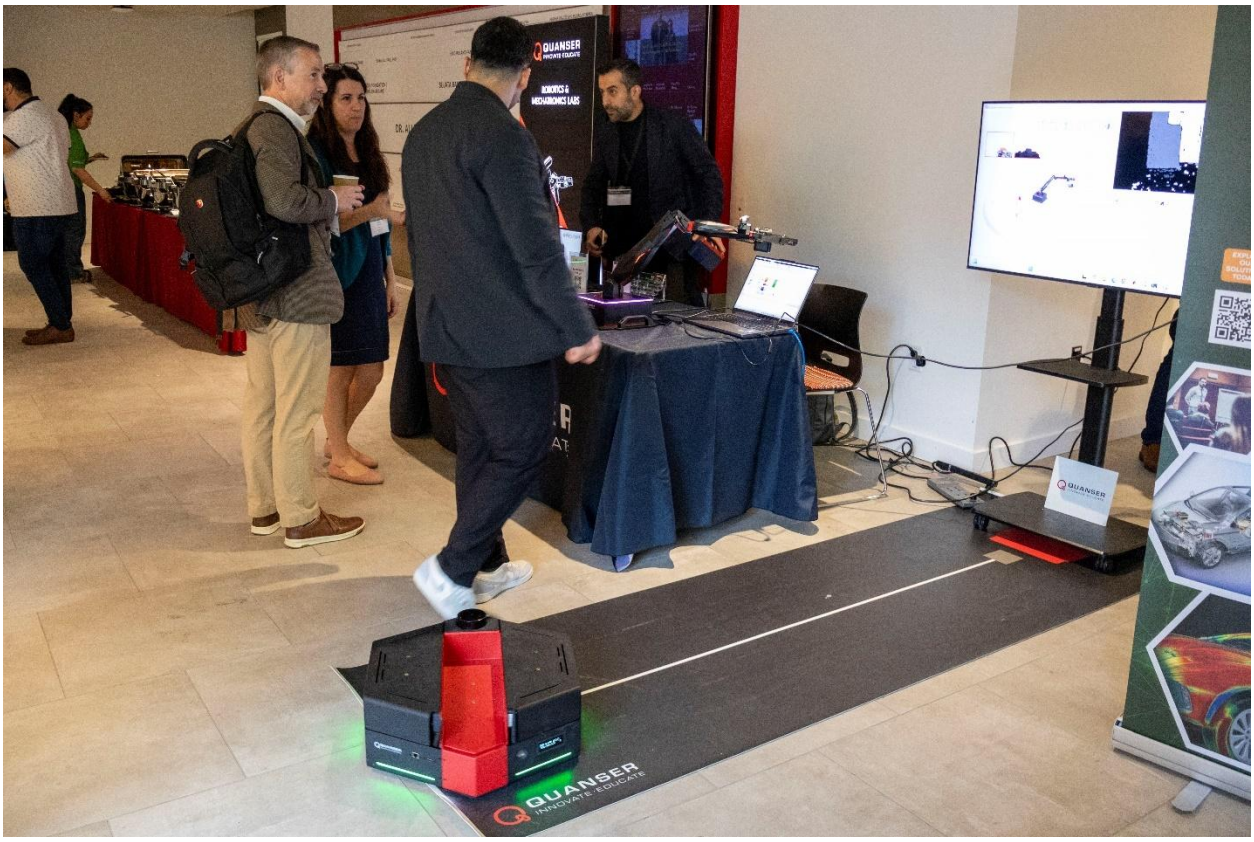
Keynote Speaker Erik K. Antonsson, Ph.D., P.E., NAE

Pictured above, left to right: 2024 ASME Edwin F. Church Medal recipient Joseph J. Rencis, Ph.D., associate dean of the School of Engineering within the College of Aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Worldwide; Guillermo Aguilar, Ph.D., the James and Ada Forsyth Professor and Department Head, who accepted the 2024 ASME Donald N. Zwiep Innovation in Education Award on behalf of the J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University; and Tahira Reid Smith, Ph.D., the Arthur L. Glenn Professor of Engineering Education, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Design at the Pennsylvania State University, the inaugural Associate Department Head for Inclusive Research and Education in Mechanical Engineering, and the director of the Research in Engineering and Interdisciplinary Design (REID) Laboratory at Penn State, as well as an ASME Fellow, who accepted the 2024 ASME Mechanical Engineering Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award on behalf of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Penn State.

Attendees tour the USC Viterbi School of Engineering lab and makerspace.

Department leaders tackle challenges in mechanical engineering and mechanical engineering technology education at the 2025 ASME MEEd Summit.



Attendees interact with exhibitor Quanser.