



ILLINOIS ASIAN-AMERICAN  
CIVIL ENGINEERS

## Summer 2025 | Celebrating 2 Years of Impact

A newsletter by the Illinois Asian-American Civil Engineers (IAACE)

In just two years, IAACE has become a vibrant statewide network connecting students, professionals, and firms across the Civil Engineering world.

### By the Numbers:

35+

Student Members

40+

Professional Members

25+

Corporate Members

25+

Events Hosted

10+

Webinars & Trainings

\$5000

Scholarship Awarded

### Upcoming Events

1. [TopGolf with ITE, WTS, ITS Midwest](#) - 8/21/2025
2. Bus Rapid Transit Event - 8/26/2025
3. Pickleball Happy Hour - September 2025
4. Soft Skills Webinar - Fall 2025
5. Chicago Bascule Bridge Tour - Fall 2025
6. Jardine Water Purification Plant Tour - Fall 2025
7. Networking Tips Webinar - Fall 2025
8. Small Businesses Workshop - Fall 2025



## IAACE 2025-2027 Board & Chairs Announcement



### IAACE Board

**President:** Lien Dastgir, PE (KAD Engineering, PLLC)

**Vice-Presidents:** Karen Yung, PE (AECOM) & Vacant

**Treasurer:** Jayesh Dongre, PE, PTOE (AECOM)

**Secretary:** Vacant

### IAACE Committee Chairs

**Marketing & Communication:** Prakarsh Gurmule, PE (HBM Engineering Group, LLC) and Yuxin Chen (GFT)

**Events:** Akshar Patel (Peralte-Clark) and Molly Ma (STV Inc.)

**Student Outreach:** Ali Issa, PE, PTOE (HBM Engineering Group, LLC) & Vacant

**Membership:** Meraj Samina Saleem (InNova Consulting Inc.) and Abdul Waheed Mohammed, PE (Michael Baker International)

**Mentorship:** Talha Mohammed, PE, PTOE (WSP) and Darshan Shah (RS&H)

**Board Emeritus:** Katherine Au, PE (Jacobs)

## President's Message

**By: Lien Dastgir, PE**  
KAD Engineering PLLC

Dear IAACE Members, Friends, and Supporters,

I am filled with immense pride and gratitude, reflecting on how far we have come together. On May 13, IAACE marked a significant milestone — our 2nd Anniversary Gala — surrounded by friends, colleagues, and supporters who have been part of our journey. It was more than a celebration; it was a moment of recognition for the hard work, dedication, and unity that have built the foundation of our organization.



Over the past two years, IAACE has made tremendous strides:

- We've built meaningful partnerships and friendships.
- We've offered technical trainings, hosted webinars, and led project site tours.
- We've established student chapters and created platforms for young professionals to learn and grow.
- We've held networking events that bring together voices across the civil engineering industry.

I am incredibly proud of our IAACE team — your tireless efforts and passion have shaped this organization into a beacon of opportunity, support, and inspiration. Together, we've made a lasting impact — especially in creating spaces where young Asian and immigrant engineers can thrive, feel seen, and be empowered.

Equity, inclusion, and belonging are not just values we speak about — they are principles we live by. And as we look ahead, we recognize there is still much work to do.

As I begin my next term as President, I remain committed to advancing our mission. In the years to come, IAACE will:

- Expand technical training opportunities.
- Build a more robust mentorship program.
- Provide increased scholarships to support future engineers.
- Advocate for minority- and women-owned businesses across the industry.

Thank you to our partners, members, and allies for believing in our mission. Together, we will continue to break barriers, uplift communities, and shape the future of civil engineering — one connection, one opportunity, and one leader at a time.

With gratitude and determination,

**Lien Dastgir, PE**

*President*

Illinois Asian-American Civil Engineers (IAACE)

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## Student Outreach Committee's Message

This year, IAACE proudly launched student chapters at:

- Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)
- University of Illinois Chicago (UIC)

### Highlights:

- ✓ Student Chapter LinkedIn pages
- ✓ Field tours to live infrastructure projects
- ✓ Scholarships and shadowing opportunities
- ✓ Student involvement in the Gala and committees
- ✓ Mentorship and career guidance from IAACE professionals

## 2025 Scholarship Update

This year, IAACE awarded:

- 🏆 1 Undergraduate Scholarship – \$2,000
- 🎓 2 Graduate Scholarships – \$1,500 each

**2026 Goal:** Increase fundraising and grow the number of awards.



## Interested in sponsoring a future scholarship?

Email: [scholarships@ia-ace.org](mailto:scholarships@ia-ace.org)



## Mentorship Committee's Message

*Empowering growth through guidance, one connection at a time.*

IAACE's annual mentorship program bridges the gap between experience and aspiration — connecting students and young professionals with mentors who've walked the path before them.

In past years, the program has grown significantly — with 6 mentor-mentee pairs in 2023–2024, and 11 pairs in the 2024–2025 program. This growth reflects a strong demand for meaningful, structured mentorship in our community.

**IAACE's 2025-2026 Mentorship Program applications are now open!**

 **Deadline: October 14, 2025**

Open to students and young professionals



### Perks include:

- Free 1-year IAACE membership
- End-of-cycle cash prize or experience
- Waitlist available for unmatched applicants



### Help Us Spread the Word

If you know a student or young professional who would benefit — or a mentor who would inspire — encourage them to sign up!

### Sign up here:

[IAACE Mentor Interest Form: 2025-2026](#)

[IAACE Mentee Interest Form: 2025-2026](#)

**Questions?** Email- [mentorship@ia-ace.org](mailto:mentorship@ia-ace.org)



## Membership Committee's Message

Our Membership Committee is the heart of community building at IAACE.

Our Membership Committee is dedicated to fostering a vibrant and supportive network for all our professional and corporate members. This team works tirelessly to ensure you feel welcome, valued, and actively involved. We have several key roles, each vital to our success: our **Recruitment & Outreach Lead** attracts new members; the **Corporate Member Relations** specialist nurtures our company partnerships; and our **Member Engagement & Retention Coordinator** keeps you connected and satisfied. The **New Member**

**Onboarding** role ensures a smooth start for everyone, while the **Member Data & Reporting Officer** maintains accurate records and provides key insights. Finally, our **Benefits & Recognition Lead** continuously enhances the value of your membership, organizing programs like "Member of the Month," and our **Committee Chair / Board Liaison** guides the team. We also collaborate closely with other committees, including Events, Treasurer, Secretary, Student Outreach, Mentorship, and Marketing & Communication, to ensure a seamless and enriching experience for you.



🔥 **We're looking for passionate new committee members!**

Want to get involved? Email: [membership@ia-ace.org](mailto:membership@ia-ace.org)

**Sign up to be an IAACE member:** <https://ia-ace.org/memberships/>

## Marketing & Communication Committee's Message

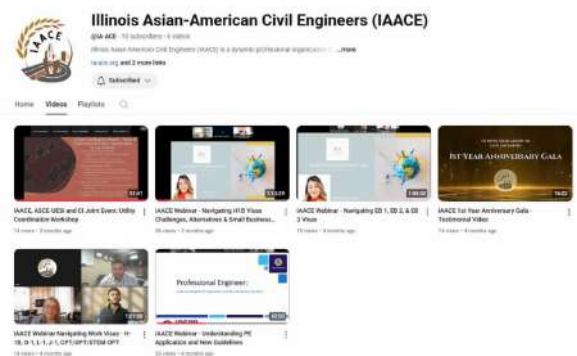
We are the storytellers behind IAACE — crafting the message, building the brand, and sharing your success.

### What We Do:

- Social Media & Promotion
- Event Flyers & Photography
- Website & YouTube Channel
- Newsletter & Public Outreach



📺 Missed a webinar? Catch up anytime! Subscribe to the [IAACE YouTube Channel](#) to watch past webinars hosted by IAACE, including important sessions like the *New PE Guidelines from IDFPR* and our *Immigration Webinar* for civil engineers.



💡 **Want to join us? Email:** [marketing@ia-ace.org](mailto:marketing@ia-ace.org)

## Events Committee's Message

The IAACE Events Committee delivered meaningful, inclusive events this year:

- 🎂 2nd Anniversary Gala – featuring agency leaders
- 🏏 Bowling Social – with SEAIO YEC
- 📁 UIC Career Panel – connecting students and agencies
- 🗣️ H1B Visa Webinar – with expert insight
- 👥 Young Professionals Panel – with EMBRACE

These events strengthened our community and advanced IAACE's mission of connection, education, and support. We look forward to hosting more engaging and inclusive events for our community!

🙌 Thank you to our volunteers, sponsors, and attendees!

Want to get involved? Email: [events@ia-ace.org](mailto:events@ia-ace.org)

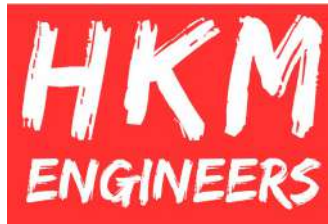


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## Thank you to our Corporate Members

We are grateful to our Corporate Members for your ongoing support.  
Your partnership strengthens our mission and impact.





Interested in becoming a corporate member?

Email: [membership@ia-ace.org](mailto:membership@ia-ace.org)

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Stay Connected



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Thank you for being part of IAACE

Together, we're shaping the next generation of civil engineering — with community, opportunity, and connection.

See you in the next issue!

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Edited by: Prakarsh Gurmule, PE (HBM Engineering Group, LLC)

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