

September 13, 2018

Dear ASCE Colleagues,

It is with great disappointment that I wish to inform you that the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has declined its invitation to host the American Institute of Steel Construction's (AISC) Student Steel Bridge Competition (SSBC) 2019 National Finals.

On July 27, 2018, AISC announced that it had terminated its three-decade SSBC partnership with ASCE due to "moving in different directions." One of the most significant "directions" AISC adopted was to prohibit international universities from the competition. In concurrence with their faculty advisors and the ASCE UTEP Chapter, UTEP has declined to host the event due to these rule changes.

One of our Branch's most recent successes was working with the ASCE UTEP Chapter, ASCE Texas Section and UTEP to host the 2017 Texas-Mexico Student Symposium. Early in the planning phase, we chose "Building Bridges. Trascendiendo Fronteras." as the mission statement for the event that included the regionals for the SSBC and Concrete Canoe Competition, and hours of courses and networking opportunities for students and professionals. With over 300 students from 18 universities (including four universities in Mexico), the event was made stronger by international involvement.

After that event, we knew that team was capable to host the SSBC finals and we were ecstatic when the opportunity arose. With over 40 teams from the United States, Mexico, Canada and China competing in the SSBC 2018 Final, we hoped for, and were prepared to assist UTEP in hosting, an even bigger event in 2019. However, upon learning of AISC's isolationist rule change, we feel that we cannot continue with our support.

We feel that bridges serve as powerful symbols of our profession, our region, and our values. While it is within AISC's rights to make these changes, we feel that the direction is inconsistent with our values as civil engineers and as El Pasoans, and we fully support UTEP in its decision. We hope that in the future, AISC will reverse their decision and elect to build bridges and transcend borders.

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Sincerely,



Christopher J. Nance, P.E., M.ASCE
President, ASCE El Paso Branch

On behalf of:

Sergio R. Mendez, P.E., M.ASCE, *Treasurer, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Jesse Valles, P.E., M.ASCE, *Secretary, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Marvin H. Gomez, P.E., M.ASCE, *Section Director, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Roxanna R. Medina, P.E., M.ASCE, *Past President, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Jorge Grajeda, P.E., M.ASCE, *Director, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Alexandra Riccillo, E.I.T., A.M.ASCE, *Director, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Nicholas N. Ybarra, P.E., M.ASCE, *Director, ASCE El Paso Branch*
Manuel A. Salas, P.E., M.ASCE, *Director, ASCE El Paso Branch*

Isabella Villagomez, S.M.ASCE, *President/SSBC Co-Director, ASCE UTEP Chapter*
Elizabeth Montes, E.I.T., A.M.ASCE, *SSBC Co-Director, ASCE UTEP Chapter*