

Collaborative Venture: Foundry Practice in the Age of Austerity
By Dylan Collins and Jeremy Entwistle

In an era where many academic fine art programs face diminished budgets and limited studio facilities, how do we ensure that our students maximize their educational opportunities in contemporary foundry practice? As sculpture faculty employed at neighboring institutions, we have sought to address these challenges by developing an interdepartmental foundry community. The overarching goals of our collaborative venture are to give students maximum exposure to a variety of media, including iron, bronze, and aluminum casting, to present multiple mold-making strategies, and to discuss strategies for furnace design/upkeep. In addition, we strive to foster a student population with broad knowledge in the metal arts and to share community resources.

This presentation will discuss both the benefits and the unexpected challenges we have encountered while working together, as well as how collaboration has helped us achieve these goals. We will provide an overview of our respective foundry programs at West Virginia University and Fairmont State University, utilizing examples of students' cast iron, bronze, and aluminum work, as well as our personal work. We will also cite specific examples and resources for individuals and institutions seeking to create a shared space and resource environment.