



2026 SEFA Annual Conference—Nov. 11– 13, 2026

J W Marriott—Aventura, Florida

Dear Members and Industry Colleagues,

Congratulations to Spain on winning the World Cup! Despite the 1-0 final score, it felt like a dominant victory over Argentina. We now look forward to SEFA's version of the World Cup (the Lab of the Year Competition) and our Annual Conference.

2026 SEFA Lab of the Year® Competition Submissions:

This year, we received seven outstanding submissions for the SEFA Lab of the Year® Competition. Those submissions are (in alphabetical order):

- Dr. Allen and Charlotte Ginsburg Human-Centered Computation Hall, University of Southern California
- Earth Sciences & Chemistry Building Level 3 Renovation, University of Waterloo
- Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Building 12, Arizona State University
- Life and Mind Building, University of Oxford
- Resnick Sustainability Center, Caltech
- Roche Diagnostics Innovation Center, Penzberg, Germany
- Vagelos Laboratory for Energy Science and Technology, University of Pennsylvania

If you are a SEFA Member that was involved in any of the above projects and are not listed on the [Project Team Sheet on our website](#), please contact me or Barbara@sefalabs.com so that we can give you credit for your involvement in our upcoming LinkedIn posts about each project. We have also finalized the list of industry experts that will be on the competition's conflict-free judging panel this year. Those experts are:

- Paul Baldinger, The S/L/A/M Collaborative
- Don Bush, HKS, Inc.
- Lloyd Fisk, Research Facilities Design
- Regal Leftwich, Hanbury
- Isabel Mandujano, DLR Group
- Brian Richard, Kirksey Architecture (Chief Judge)

Thank you to everyone that submitted a project this year and to the architects that have agreed to be on the judging panel! On September 22nd, these judges will meet in Houston for an entire day to discuss each project that was submitted. At this meeting, the judges will decide which project will win Lab of the Year and which will be the High Honors Award recipient. After the judges meet, we will announce on SEFA's [LinkedIn page](#) who the two competition finalists are and if any other projects were given special recognition awards, so stay tuned!

SEFA Annual Conference:

Those two Lab of the Year finalists will be invited to SEFA's Annual Conference at the JW Marriott Miami Turnberry to make presentations about their projects on the morning of November 12 th , and those presentations will be immediately followed by the Lab of the Year Awards Ceremony. Therefore, if you want to see those informative presentations and be in the room when the winner of the competition is announced (in addition to experiencing all of the other great items we have on this year's [agenda](#)), make sure to [register for our Annual Conference](#).

We currently have 29 people signed up for our Annual Conference "No Pressure" Golf Scramble, so if you would like to play this year and haven't signed up yet, please email barbara@sefalabs.com as soon as possible. Lastly, there are still Annual Conference sponsorship opportunities available, so if you are interested in being a sponsor at this year's conference, please email barbara@sefalabs.com.

P.S. The current room rate at the JW Marriott Miami Turnberry for the dates of our Annual Conference (November 11-13) is now a whopping \$750 a night! Meanwhile, the room rate within our room block is just \$289 a night, so make sure to register before our block is filled.

Top Down Analytics Lab Designer Project Survey:

Over the last few months, SEFA staff, Board Members, and Advisory Board Members have been working with Top Down Analytics to create a Lab Designer Project Survey that aims to collect important trend data about recent laboratory projects from architects and lab planners only. The results of this survey will then be distributed to all SEFA Members and any non-Member firms that participate to ensure that we have the most up-to-date industry data. For many members, these survey results will be considered a leading economic indicator for their company. Top Down Analytics will be reaching out to lab design firms in the coming weeks to conduct the survey and gather the necessary data.

SEFA is offering one free Annual Conference registration and a free copy of the survey results to any non-Member lab design firm that is willing to participate in this survey. Therefore, if you would like to [participate in this survey](#), please email Glenn Cudiamat (glenn@tdaresearch.com) from Top Down Analytics. The responses provided by the architects and lab planners will not be identifiable to a specific firm in the survey results. If you are a non-member and provide responses to the survey, please contact barbara@sefalabs.com for information about our Annual Conference and how to redeem your free registration. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at SEFA's World Cup Final in a few months!

Ross Sutton, JD

**Associate General Counsel, Director of Marketing
Scientific Equipment and Furniture Association**