

Perspectives on Diversity

Megan J. Cordill

More than a decade ago, TMS established the Women in Materials Science and Engineering Committee as a forum to explore issues of concern to female scientists and engineers. Since then, TMS has led the way for other materials societies on diversity and inclusion initiatives within the STEM (sciences, technology, engineering, and math) fields, but has also expanded the scope of topics addressed by the group.

The newly named Diversity Committee has spearheaded events, initiatives, and policies to ensure that TMS is a fully representative materials society. We are now addressing other important matters that concern our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) members and at the same time are exploring strategies to better support any members experiencing physical, mental, or emotional health concerns. The committee is also working toward providing mentoring opportunities to members representing racial and ethnic minorities as well as encouraging more engagement from our international members.

The four articles comprising the Perspectives on Diversity compilation in the July 2019 issue of *JOM* highlight our evolution from a female-specific group to a more well-rounded and inclusive committee. This collection of articles also provides a preview of the key issues and potential solutions that anyone can implement to impact both the TMS membership and our professions.

First, bias in the workplace will be addressed by Blythe Clark and Olivia Underwood. Their article, “Mitigating Implicit Bias as a Leader,” provides current methods and recommendations for leaders to mitigate bias in order to encourage more diversity and inclusion in STEM.

Matthew Korey next provides a view on gender identities in STEM and what support systems are necessary to be one’s true self by summarizing the LGBTQ+ branch of talks and activities from the TMS2019 diversity symposium in his article, “What’s the T, Cis? Discussing Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation in TMS.”

The third article, “The Elephant in the Room: Where is the Empathy in Science?” addresses how principle investigators, postdocs, and graduate students can take care of their mental health, something that is often overlooked by everyone regardless of identity. Jennifer Carter and Laura Bruckman detail steps that individuals can take to help themselves and those they may supervise with the mental health aspects of being in academia and to remove the stigma behind mental illness.

Finally, in “Promoting Positive Outcomes in K–12 Outreach through Design,” Jessica Krogstad, Kaitlin Tyler, Nicole Johnson-Glauch, and Leon Dean describe the effectiveness of incorporating design elements into outreach camps as a means to build confidence in high-school women to study engineering or sciences to better supply the STEM pipeline.

It is intended that the information, insights, and guidance presented by these various authors on these topics will generate positive change within the diversity spectrum. Because understanding the humanity of our profession is, on many levels, as important as understanding the science.

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“Perspectives on Diversity” serves as an introduction to a thematic group of articles in the July 2019 issue of *JOM* covering diversity and inclusion topics. The article package is the first feature series developed by the TMS Diversity Committee. For additional information, contact Kaitlin Calva, *JOM* Magazine Managing Editor, at kcalva@tms.org.

