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Keeping the Focus on Collaboration: The *JOM* Interview with 2015 President Patrice Turchi

Lynne Robinson

TMS board motions, minutes, and musings

This regular *JOM* feature offers news and perspectives on TMS governance, as well as Board of Directors activities, priorities, and decisions. To find out how you can become involved in these initiatives, contact James J. Robinson, TMS executive director, at robinson@tms.org.

Editor's Note: TMS 2015 President Patrice Turchi will complete his term at the TMS 2016 Annual Meeting & Exhibition (TMS2016), February 14–18, in Nashville, Tennessee. *JOM* invited him to share some of his experiences and reflect on the lessons learned during his busy presidential year.

JOM: International collaboration was a particular area of focus for you as TMS president. How do you hope these efforts have positioned TMS for the future in expanding its global outreach?

Turchi: I have obviously been building on what my predecessors in this position had started to “globally expand the portfolio of

international activities,” which is goal 3 of the 2018 TMS Strategic Plan. For instance, Jim Robinson, TMS executive director, and I had the opportunity to meet the executive board of the Federation of European Societies (FEMS) while attending EUROMAT 2015. We are now on track to sign a memorandum of understanding with FEMS at the TMS2016 Annual Meeting & Exhibition (TMS2016) in Nashville. This will allow TMS to co-program at EUROMAT 2017 in Greece. Reciprocally, FEMS will develop programming at TMS2017.

The benefit that I see in this is an opportunity for scientists on both continents to exchange ideas, network, and possibly seek opportunities for sponsored activities. There is indeed a different emphasis on scientific activities in Europe, and being exposed to these differences can only advance science worldwide. Many thanks go to Margarethe Hofmann, 2015 FEMS president, Hugh Dunlop, FEMS executive secretariat, and Brett Suddell, 2016 FEMS president, and the boards of both TMS and FEMS for making this collaboration possible.

We've also made progress on reaching out across the Americas. The 3rd Pan American Materials Congress will be co-located with TMS2017 in San Diego and is being shaped by a terrific team of organizers representing eight countries, under the leadership of Marc Meyers. I also spent some time this year exploring a potential Pan American Federation of Materials Societies. I was highly encouraged that the Organization of American States (OAS) supports this



Patrice Turchi outlined his goals as the 2015 TMS president during the TMS-AIME Awards Ceremony at TMS2015 in Orlando.



TMS and FEMS leadership met in 2015 to discuss potential future initiatives. Celebrating these new collaborations at the Euromat 2015 Gala Dinner are (left to right): James J. Robinson, TMS executive director; Patrice Turchi, 2015 TMS president; Margarethe Hofmann, 2015 FEMS president; and Brett Suddell, 2016 FEMS president.

concept, which we explored with them during a visit to OAS in Washington, D.C. over the summer.

Jim Robinson and I were also able to visit the headquarters of the Institute of Materials, Minerals, and Mining (IOM3) in London to clarify and possibly enhance the TMS-IOM3 partnership. Similarly, the two of us, as well as TMS Vice President Stan Howard and TMS Past President Hani Henein, traveled to Toronto to attend the Conference of Metallurgists and meet with the leadership of the Metallurgy and Materials Society of CIM. And I need to mention our activities with our partners in Asia. Energy Materials 2017, co-organized with the Chinese Society of Metals, will be co-located with TMS2017. Coming up even sooner is the 9th Pacific Rim International Conference on Advanced Materials, August 1–5, 2016, in Kyoto, Japan.

To ensure proper follow-up on all these global activities, the TMS Board decided to create an ad hoc committee dedicated to international affairs. Much more work still needs to be done on our global outreach efforts, so stay tuned for news and developments in the future.

***JOM:* Another priority for your presidential year was enhancing synergies within the TMS organization, especially across disciplines and technical committees. What motivated you to work on this?**

Turchi: Early on in my presidency, it became clear to me that the common denominator for everything I hoped to accomplish at the international, national, and societal levels was programming. During my subsequent travels, I also realized that TMS has a significant asset: 32 technical committees spanning across five technical divisions. This is indeed a terrific pool of expertise that, working synergistically, creates strong and unique programming at the annual meeting, as well as at all topical and international TMS-sponsored conferences. But we can be even more

collaborative. The idea here is to preserve the core competencies that are extremely well represented at TMS, while enhancing program content when there is a need and opportunity.

***JOM:* Several initiatives supporting your programming goals were identified at a TMS Board retreat held this past summer on what the TMS Annual Meeting & Exhibition might look like by 2023. What were the specific outcomes of the retreat and what are their potential impacts?**

Turchi: Summarizing the complete output of this retreat would be too long for this article. In short, however, we updated the 2018 TMS Strategic Plan and identified tactics to facilitate and improve



Patrice Turchi launched his term at TMS2015 with his wife, Michèle (left) and their daughter, Elodie, proudly looking on.

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TMS Executive Director

coordination among technical divisions and committees. The most immediate consequence of this effort was the creation of a bridge committee construct to stimulate collaboration among technical divisions. The initial bridge committee to be developed focuses on additive manufacturing. I would encourage every TMS member to think for a moment about how many technical committees among the 32 existing ones would be potentially interested in this topic. Amazing, isn't it, that so many would have something to contribute to additive manufacturing-related science and engineering?

In addition, the board has been

encouraging improved coordination among the technical divisions and their committees for international conferences, starting with those that will be co-located at TMS2017. My vision is to have symposia and conferences framed so that attendees could pursue their scientific curiosity at the highest level at TMS meetings until the last minute of the last day of the conference, and possibly beyond.

JOM: You and other TMS leaders twice visited the offices of U.S. legislators on Capitol Hill during your presidency. What did you hope to gain with this outreach and do you sense that the effort had any impact?

Turchi: My latest Congressional visit was right before the Board retreat in July. The schedule included both House and Senate visits and was pretty full—I can confirm that we logged more than eight miles of walking in one day! The most important goal was to offer the technical expertise and rich information that TMS has available to staffers and some members of Congress on topics that are now being debated on the Hill. This includes energy, sustainability, manufacturing, critical materials, and much more. We also took the opportunity to dispel misconceptions regarding caps on travel support for scientists and engineers from government and government-sponsored institutions.

It is always hard to forecast what the impact of such visits have, but we were all pleased to hear in the fall that the rules for travel have been eased for scientists. Also, during one of our Congressional visits, we had a request for assistance on the spot. This confirmed to us that these visits are important for TMS and its members.

JOM: In what areas would you like to see TMS develop?

Turchi: Attending a TMS meeting entails much more than sharing our scientific work with others. It is also about networking, discussing science with the “old timers” (Am I one already?), seeking opportunities for collaboration and partnership, and experiencing friendship. As TMS president, I have been very involved with many leadership and strategy activities. As I think about it, it is a little sad that I have discovered these opportunities so late in my



Patrice Turchi and James J. Robinson, TMS executive director, made a point of visiting several organizations with a high concentration of TMS members in 2015 (photo above). The first stop in this effort was Turchi's employer, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). Pictured are (from left): Turchi; Robert Maxwell, division leader, Materials Science Division; Hani Henein, TMS past president; William Goldstein, LLNL director; Robinson; Glenn Fox, associate director, Physical and Life Sciences Directorate.

Another visit was to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), where (left to right)

Amy Clarke, scientist, and Eric Brown, division leader, Explosive Science and Shock Physics, among many other TMS members, welcomed and toured Robinson and Turchi throughout the facilities. If you are interested in a visit from TMS leadership to your organization, please contact James Robinson at robinson@tms.org.



scientific career. Indeed, our profession seems to be sheltered from these two words—leadership and strategy.

During our scientific life, we need to lead projects and teams and strategize the best way to ask questions to get at the most productive answers. And, we learn this over time simply by trial and error. I think it would be great if TMS could expand on these two critical words in what it offers to members in a not-too-far-distant future. I will leave this to future presidents who, I have no doubt, will come up with great ideas on the topic.

As an aside, during the summer retreat that I discussed earlier, I was amazed at how well the board and staff were able to strategize together. It was a learning experience that I wish every TMS member could have. Many thanks go to all who participated! Everyone comes across strategic plans in their scientific lives, and usually the question is: So what? While serving with TMS, I have learned that it is great to have a strategic plan, but most importantly, this effort has to be followed by an implementation plan and a suite of tactics to have an impact.

***JOM:* You've had quite a busy year, but is there any one experience that stands out to you that you would like to share?**

Turchi: What I learned with my sensei when I was discovering the art of bonsai is that you can't fool nature. You have to be gentle, patient, and learn about its cyclic responses. I drew on this when I started as TMS president. I had ideas—and definitely too many I must say—so I had to calm down a bit, and come to the realization that I was not alone.

I fully recognize now that we at TMS are like a big family. Every member with his or her own scientific expertise, historical background, culture, and gender has a critical role to play in fine tuning what TMS is about. We at TMS like to claim that we are a bottom-up organization—and it is true. I met many enthusiastic volunteers during my presidential term who were solely driven by the idea of making our scientific life better, and this in turn, motivated me to dedicate as much as I could to the “job.” On this point, I would like to thank Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

management for its support in making adjustments to my scientific activities and schedule for that purpose.

***JOM:* What lessons learned have you taken with you from your TMS president experience?**

Turchi: During our trip to London to visit IOM3, I was able to find a few minutes to go to a famous bookstore and browse a few volumes of one of the most formidable thinkers of the modern era, Bertrand Russell. To quote one of his books: “Science does not aim at establishing immutable truths and eternal dogmas; its aim is to approach the truth by successive approximations, without claiming that at any stage, final and complete accuracy has been achieved.”

Inspired by this quote, I would say that as president, I do not claim much. I just spent a terrific year building on what past presidents have achieved, and approaching some of the challenges that TMS may face in the future in incremental steps. I will now rely on future presidents, with my help if need be, to guarantee that TMS remains the professional society of choice for everything that deals with minerals, metals and materials, from extraction to recycling, with all the science and engineering in between.

TMS Board Actions at a Glance

Meeting of October 4, 2015

- Approved changes to TMS Foundation programs, effective with the 2017 awards cycle, to better position the Foundation for long-term sustainability
- Approved conducting the 6th International Conference on Recrystallization and Grain Growth, July 17–21, 2016, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Approved revisions to the TMS Fellow Awards Subcommittee bylaws to refocus the award selection criteria to balance academic, government, and industry representation

Meeting of December 7, 2015

- Approved Society and Foundation budgets for 2016
- Approved conducting the professional development event, Control of Potline Scrubber for Fugitive Emissions for Aluminum Smelters, May 8–15, 2016, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Approved conducting the professional development event, Aluminum Cast Shop Science and Technology Course, May 29–June 3, 2016, in Hamburg, Germany
- Approved formation of a TMS Ad Hoc International Affairs Committee.
- Approved P.A. Manohar and John Pepin as TMS/ABET Program Evaluators