Volunteers: The Key to Annual Meeting Success, Past and Present

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My first TMS Annual Meeting was in 1974 in New York City. At that time, the conference was the annual meeting of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers.

At that first conference I, a young graduate student, presented my first paper based on my Master's thesis work at McGill University. This was a time when I met many of the established and emerging leaders of our community. I, very excitedly and nervously, met many of the authors of textbooks I used in my courses. What I was studying and learning became much more a living experience than information on a page. Many of the people I met and continue to meet at the Annual Meetings have become good close friends.

At those early meetings, requests for symposia and abstracts were submitted on paper by snail mail to headquarters, well before the Annual Meeting. Papers were published in individual format but were sometimes grouped into symposia publications (that was a novel idea at the time!). Rarely were papers or proceedings available at the meeting. Slide projectors and carousels were the main method of presenting one's work. Program Committee Meetings and grid-ding of the meeting was an elaborate exercise that had to be attended in person during a full one-day meeting.

Much has changed in over 35 years of Annual Meetings. The technology used in planning and delivering our TMS meetings has vastly changed, updated, and improved. While the world has shrunk as evidenced by increasing international participation at our An-

nual Meetings, the basics of the way we operate, though, remain the same. We depend on individual members to present their ideas for programming through technical committees, to organize the symposia, to chair the sessions, and to present their work at the sessions. Many of the improvements of our operation are due to the hard work of TMS members and TMS staff. Among these, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Dr. Jim Foley, my predecessor as TMS Program Committee chair, who worked tirelessly to improve our operations efficiency and collaboration with other societies in meetings planning.

I am very delighted to see that the number of students attending the Annual Meeting continues to grow. This bodes well for the future of our society, so long as we continue to integrate them into our committees and welcome their ideas and young leadership. A constant through the years of change is that TMS remains a member-run society of professionals in the materials community. The participation of individual members in committee meetings and discussions continues to be the backbone of our structure. In 2010, many committees convened in the same rooms where sessions were held. This is to encourage an atmosphere of inclusion for all members interested in contributing. Also in 2010 we instituted an opportunity for Late News submissions, where researchers and operators can present hot-off-the-press results of interest to the community. This was such a great success we are planning to repeat it for the 2011 Annual Meeting. Poster presentations continue to grow and are a great vehicle for communicating one's work and meeting other attendees.

New initiatives to improve the quality of the meeting for attendees are always

being considered as well as new programming ventures. The cornerstone of these ideas is how best to provide members with information and networking opportunities of high quality for their professional benefit. Thus, we continue to explore the impact of a uniform time schedule for the Annual Meeting. We aim to make it easier for delegates to hop from one session to the next. There are still mixed views on this issue, so we would like to have your input. The other consideration being explored is the initiation of a set of sessions dealing with the management of materials. Whether in academia, government, or industry, we all face many growing management challenges in a global environment. These management issues in our materials profession include topics such as intellectual property, innovation, competitiveness, energy, government policies, recruiting, environment, etc. The approach to each of these will vary greatly across the globe. It would be of value to share the various approaches used internationally. We aim to explore the first of these sessions at the 2011 Annual Meeting. We look forward to learning of your contribution to this new initiative.

So while the mechanics has changed over the past 35 or more years, we remain a vibrant materials community looking forward to the next Annual Meeting, not only to present our new contributions but to make new and catch up with old friendships. I look forward to seeing you at the 2011 Annual Meeting, February 27–March 3, 2011 in San Diego, California.

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