Get Involved: Carl Boehlert Discusses Award Committee Selections

Kelly Zappas

"Get Involved" is a new recurring End Notes feature that will spotlight the work of TMS volunteers and provide an overview of the wide range of activities available through TMS. This month, Carl Boehlert, an associate professor at the University of Michigan, provides insight into the workings of TMS award committees. Boehlert served as chair of the Robert Lansing Hardy and Champion H. Mathewson Awards Committee in 2010.

Q. What was your first volunteer role with TMS?

A. My first volunteer role with TMS was probably when I attended my first TMS-sponsored conference as a graduate student. I volunteered to be a student room monitor at a TMS Fall Meeting in Chicago.

Q. This year, you chaired a committee responsible for selecting the recipients of two TMS awards. How did you become the committee chair?

A. In 2007, I was notified that I was nominated to serve on the TMS Robert Lansing Hardy and Champion H. Mathewson Awards Committee, and if I accepted this position, it would entail service from 2008 through 2011. During 2008 and 2009, Dennis Dimiduk was the chair of the committee. In 2010, I was nominated to be the chair of this committee.

Q. What kind of work is involved in chairing an awards committee?

A. This awards committee involves evaluating nomination packages for the Robert Lansing Hardy Award. The first step in the evaluation process is evaluating whether or not the nominee is eligible for the award. Once the nominee has been deemed eligible, the award committee members need to rank all the nominees based on the criteria for the award. The committee members consider the letters of reference, the past accomplishments, and the past service of the nominees in making their rankings. After all members submit their rankings, a conference call usually takes

place and the candidates' nomination packages are discussed until there is a clear winner. The chair facilitates this process.

For the Champion H. Mathewson Award, which is given to the authors of the best paper in *Metallurgical and Materials Transactions* for a given year, usually there are around 50 papers nominated by Key Readers. Each committee member is given between six and eight of these papers to read and select the best paper out of this group to go forward into the next round. Six papers make it into the second round and each committee member needs to evaluate and rank these six. Next, there is usually a committee conference call, and the winner is then decided. Again, the chair facilitates this process.

Q. Are awards committees in need of additional volunteers? If so, what qualifications should volunteers have and what kind of work should they expect to do?

A. The award committees are always in need of volunteers. Volunteers are expected to carefully read through nomination packages and technical papers and be able to make decisions based on merit. Sometimes it takes a few hours to

read through a single nomination package or technical paper. The committee member should be able to clearly justify the reasons why they made their ranking, both verbally and in writing. In my opinion, qualified committee members should have published in respected peer-reviewed journals previously. Though I do not believe that there are any written qualifications that TMS has in regard to the committee members, it is imperative that the committee members be able to make an objective decision based on the merit demonstrated in the nomination packages.

Q. How has volunteering with TMS helped you professionally?

A. I have been told by my university administrators that being actively involved in professional societies, especially in leadership roles, is looked at positively when one is being evaluated for promotion. But probably the greatest aspect of volunteering for me is the satisfaction that I am doing something that helps the greater good of the society.

Q. What advice would you give to a new TMS member who was hoping to become more involved in the society?

A. There are a lot of activities and committees that one can potentially become active in. Choose those that you are most interested in and see where they take you. And finally, have fun with whatever you get involved in with a professional society.

Kelly Zappas is a contributing writer for TMS.

If you want to get involved in a TMS awards committee, contact Deb Price, TMS student affairs and awards administrator, at price@tms.org. If you know of a TMS member who should be featured in a future "Get Involved" column, contact Kelly Zappas at kzappas@tms.org.