IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."

—Anonymous but commonly ascribed to Anaïs Nin, Steven Covey, the Talmud, and many others

It has been widely communicated within TMS that the Society's strategic plan is designated "TMS Aspires," and the first goal within that plan is "TMS aspires to be a highly inclusive society where all materials students and professionals feel welcome and diversity is celebrated." It is a rallying goal. In the 2010s and now 2020s, TMS has pursued Goal 1 with vigor via words and action and will continue to do so.

I know with certainty that much exceptional and meaningful work has been done within TMS to advance Goal 1. Am I biased in my assessment? Perhaps a bit as I'm the TMS Executive Director, but we all have some biases that we try to work past to better see what is real, right? Now, while people can be biased, what about a materials-focused professional society? In 2020, the TMS Board of Directors asked that very question. To explore it, the Board commissioned the ad hoc Committee on Potential Biases within the Society Culture. Chaired by 2020 TMS President Thomas Battle, the ad hoc committee took its job seriously and worked with rigor. It delivered an in-depth report to the Board as part of TMS2021 Virtual.

At a high level, the committee "did not find evidence of explicit, conscious bias directed to any specific group. However, there is indication of the existence of implicit, unconscious bias that may interfere with the full engagement of many TMS members in the life of the Society." To address these issues, a suite of recommendations followed. The Board took the report and recommendations and worked with staff to develop an implementation plan, and that plan was approved at MS&T21.

The new plan works in complement to TMS Aspires, being called "TMS Resolves." At the highest level, it reflects the intent of the Society to abolish long-standing processes and cultural norms within TMS that pose significant barriers to the engagement of members who do not have ties to established groups.

TMS Resolves contains four goals and 17 tactics. It assigns tactical oversight to appropriate volunteer functional committees throughout the Society and identifies metrics by which to track progress on the tactics. The TMS Resolves goals are:

1. TMS Resolves to Diversify the TMS Community
2. TMS Resolves to Infuse TMS Norms and Culture with Inclusionary Practices
3. TMS Resolves to Train TMS Volunteers to Be Effective and Inclusive Leaders
4. TMS Resolves to Bring Equity to Committee Engagement by Virtualization and Other Tools

How to do that? The tactics cluster into the following broad areas:

1. Coaching existing and emerging volunteer leadership to better recruit, engage, mentor, and orient new and existing volunteers
2. Recruiting and engaging more—and more diverse—members in TMS volunteer activities
3. Training and enabling TMS members to be more effective and inclusive in their volunteer activities
4. Orienting TMS members as to Society best practices, a culture of mentorship, bias-free communication, and avoidance of unconscious bias
5. Developing new volunteer opportunities and using virtual tools to enable wider engagement

I'm enthusiastic to be among the staff and volunteers who will implement TMS Resolves. I am confident that you will see many tangible results in the Society's not-to-distant future.

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James J. Robinson
Executive Director

@JJRoTMS

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