

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

"I know who you are. You're famous. I see you every month in JOM."

—Attendee at TMS2023 after introducing myself

Beyond that quote, do we really need to know anything more about last March's TMS2023 to declare it a success? One of the 4,499 attendees inflated my ego, so "Victory!" Let's move on with planning TMS2024. . . . No can do: My reliably ego-deflating conscience says, "Hang on a minute Mr. Executive Director. Your self-esteem should be very low among TMS2023's performance metrics. Like, really low." Okay, okay. Let's have a look at some less Jim-a-ta-tive and more quantitative numbers as to how well TMS did in convening and serving the materials community in a surprisingly cool and soggy San Diego, California. Can do.

We will assess by considering TMS2023 performance statistics as well as opinions from our post-event survey:

1. With so many of our event-planning aspirations unceremoniously COVID-crushed during 2020, 2021, and 2022, we knew that setting an attendance goal of 4,300 for TMS2023 was risky. To the credit of our full community, we exceeded planned attendance by about 5%. Better, this year's meeting looked a lot like the "normal" that has long characterized our annual meeting and exhibition. TMS2023 is our 4th best-attended annual meeting, attracting only 182 fewer registrants than the record TMS2020, which was held just days before the Great Pandemic Shutdown. The return to form is a significant relief for our association and the field that we serve.
2. Who were the registrants? Rounding, 1,300 were TMS professional members; 1,100 were nonmember professionals; 1,400 were students. That is a record turnout for students—tomorrow's professional members.
3. With all of the students in attendance, it is no surprise that the number of teams for the 16th TMS Materials Bowl posted a record as well: 16 schools competed. Congratulations to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities on winning their second championship in a row.
4. Having people attend is one thing, having a good experience on arrival is another. For insight, we survey all event participants. One of our key questions for comparative purposes asks attendees to rate the meeting on a scale of "excellent," "good," "average," "fair," and "poor." I tend to aggregate the "excellent" and "good" scores to get a sense of general positivity and the "fair" and "poor" scores to get a sense of general negativity. The general positivity rating among professionals for TMS2023 is 79%, which tracks well with an average score of 78% for the last nine years (tossing out the two pandemic meetings). As for general negativity, TMS2023 scores 7% as compared to the non-COVID multiyear average of 5%.
5. While on site, the most popular activity, aside from networking, was attending technical sessions. We were well-equipped as more than 4,900 presentations were proposed for the meeting. The most popular programming tracks for abstract submissions were additive technologies, advanced materials, and materials processing. On site, professionals espoused to be most interested in the following tracks: additive technologies, light metals, and nuclear materials.

I also review the data for insights on what event amenities stand out in the positivity and negativity scores. For TMS2023, positivity was strongly on the side of Wi-Fi access. We've been beaten up over this in the past, so hooray for progress! For negativity, the drubbing once again goes to our food and beverage offerings. We know that coffee running out is an annoyance, but driving rain has an especially negative impact on a food truck experience. I apologize for that. Come see how we do better with TMS2024 in Orlando. We'll surely dodge the rain as the whole event will be under the single (very large) roof of the Hyatt Regency! When you see me there, my positivity rating will go up if you comment on how famous I am!

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James J. Robinson
Executive Director

 @JJRofTMS

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