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Engaging and inspiring MRS members

Michael R. Fitzsimmons
2019 MRS President

The Materials Research Society (MRS) has long been considered an organization that consistently provides unrivaled meetings and networking opportunities, but we are so much more. In fact, the MRS Board of Directors, working with MRS operating committees and Headquarters staff, has recently developed and put into action a strategic plan to better “engage our members across generations to advance their careers and promote materials research and innovation.” Making this vision become reality is our task currently.

The strategic plan recognizes that MRS has an obligation to engage and nurture networking opportunities for our members throughout their entire careers—from students to seasoned professionals. To those ends, Student Engagement and Early Career Professional Engagement Subcommittees were recently created to develop new programs and activities relevant to the needs of our next generation of researchers. In addition to job postings, the MRS online Career Central offers a broad range of professional development and career services at MRS Spring and Fall Meetings. Workshops on presentation skills, salary negotiation, resume writing, and interview and networking tips are all geared to prepare these members for the critical transition from graduate student to the workforce. Likewise, the MRS Career Central web page provides tip sheets and templates for job seekers, and the MRS OnDemand® Webinar Series is delivering important career and leadership sessions right to where you work or live.

For members who are early-stage innovators or entrepreneurs, MRS offers the iMatSci Innovation Showcase. Held during MRS Fall Meetings, this event is a valuable platform for demonstrating new products to high-level decision makers and venture investors. Did you know that, to date, innovators who have participated in iMatSci have collectively raised an impressive \$67 million in funding subsequent to having attended the event? The interactive program also provides innovation-related seminars, workshops, and panel discussions with topics specifically geared toward commercializing new technologies.

Of course, we continue to produce high-quality meetings and publications, ensuring that members of all career stages can present and publish their most important and timely work to an interdisciplinary audience. But MRS Meetings also provide opportunities for fun and competitive engagement. Examples include Science as Art, Science in Video, the Open Data Challenge, and PowerPoint Karaoke (which brought cheers and laughter to the recent Spring Meeting hallways in Phoenix). And I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention the



MRS Frontiers Reception, which was a featured event at the Spring Meeting in Phoenix. This energetic brainstorming session spanned hot topic areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum materials, synthetic biology, sustainability, and more, and will help guide content development for future MRS Meetings and publications.

Finally, I encourage you to participate in our free MRS OnDemand Webinars. These live events provide valuable information on emerging topics by subject experts and global thought leaders. The online format enables you to network with other researchers from around the world. I also urge you to consider our social media effort—a network with more than 40,000 materials science-minded people by connecting with MRS on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

Engaging and better serving members across generations is a major goal to which MRS is committed. With the collaborative efforts of volunteers and the Society as a whole, we will reach these aspirations—inspiring and preparing our members for the professional and leadership roles that lie ahead.

Michael R. Fitzsimmons

ENGAGING AND INSPIRING MEMBERS

PRIORITIES: 2018-2020

- Differentiate the MRS Spring and Fall Meetings
- Utilize *MRS Bulletin*, webinar and evolving technologies to engage members
- Refresh MRS governance by engaging multiple generations

MRS[®] ASPIRATION: 2027

MRS engages members across generations to advance their careers and promote materials research and innovation

PRIORITIES: 2018-2020

ADVANCING MEMBER CAREERS

- Create high-quality, nimble forums to present and publish research
- Catalyze career development

