

TMS2016 THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

TMS2016 STUDENT-RUN SYMPOSIUM

The outcomes of the 2014 Diversity in the Minerals, Metals, and Materials Professions Summit inspired Natalie Larson, Wennie Wang, and David Hwang to organize the Transforming the Diversity Landscape symposium for TMS2016. All graduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Larson, Wang, and Hwang had two goals for the event: to identify measures of success for the future of diversity in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and to empower individuals and institutions by providing tools and ideas on improving diversity in STEM. The symposium was split into two sessions, Significance and Impact and Taking Action.

The “Taking Action” session concluded with a panel discussion of past TMS presidents. Overall, the panelists were optimistic about the future of diversity in STEM, with Robert Shull, 2007 TMS President, noting that “inclusion is already happening and will happen as long as we create a diverse community.” Several said progress has been made, both within TMS and in their past or present places of employment, but a significant amount of work still needs to be done. On this point, the group highlighted that the first step toward an inclusive professional environment is being aware of one’s own inherent biases. “We all have biases, but that doesn’t make us bad people,” said Wayne Jones, 1999 TMS President. “Ask yourself questions that you know the answers to, and be humble. It’s easy to say you know the answer, but you can always develop skills and techniques to be more fair in your evaluation of other people.”

When questioned further about advancing diversity and inclusion issues as an individual, the panel agreed that it was important to get involved in any way possible. Tresa



(Left to right): Wennie Wang, Natalie Larson, and David Hwang, students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, organized the Transforming the Diversity Landscape Symposium at TMS2016. They are pictured holding the 1994 Nobel Prize in Physics awarded to Clifford Shull, father of 2007 TMS President and diversity symposium panelist, Robert Shull.

Pollock, 2005 TMS President, advised students and young professionals to take advantage of opportunities at TMS, and to make sure they have role models and mentors who are helpful and care about the same issues. Daniel Thoma, 2003 TMS President, noted that to be an effective diversity advocate, “you have to be committed to it... You have to be active and be a voice.”

The TMS2016 student-run symposium was sponsored by the TMS Education Committee.



A highlight of the TMS2016 student-run symposium was a panel discussion of past TMS Presidents. From left to right: Daniel Thoma, 2003 TMS President and University of Wisconsin-Madison; Wayne Jones, 1999 TMS President and University of Michigan; Robert Shull, 2007 TMS President and National Institute of Standards and Technology; Tresa Pollock, 2005 TMS President and University of California, Santa Barbara; Brajendra Mishra, 2006 TMS President and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI); and Diran Apelian, 2008 TMS President and WPI.