

April 2021

Dear Members,

Spring is a great time of year. It is characterized as a time of hope and positive change as the trees begin to bud and flowers bloom. Spring is also a time of transition and growth for the Pittsburgh Section. This time each year, the Section brings in a new slate of board members and we begin thinking about the strategic plans of our Section, Institutes, Student Chapters, and Committees. This year we also have a busy spring schedule of events and activities as well, a bit of a change from the previous year's reaction to a changed world. Frankly, change is always on the horizon, no matter the season.

The recent guilty verdict that was issued in the Derek Chauvin case can provide an example of how change can occur. All too often, we are reactive and fail to be proactive. We see warning signs or make predictions but fail to act or to engage in meaningful conversation until it is too late, or after the damage is done. This happens with our healthcare, our infrastructure, our relationships, and it happened to George Floyd and many others like him. I hope that we can learn from our mistakes and begin to engage our community leaders and colleagues in sincere and honest discussions to make proactive changes that can improve the lives of everyone, particularly for those that may lack the tools or abilities to act on their own. We can do better, and we should do better.

New Board Members

As mentioned in last month's letter, ASCE is only able to provide value to our membership because of the help of our amazing volunteers who help the organization grow and adapt to changing times. I am excited to present the newly appointed President-Elect and Directors who will be installed during the May Board Meeting.

President-Elect: Thomas M. Batrone, Senior Technical Director at AKRF

Directors:

- Colleen Elliott, Associate at Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.
- Timothy D. Brett, Senior Project Manager at Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG)
- Dr. Sajad Hamidi, Associate Professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)

I extend my appreciation to Alma Rettinger, Justin Brooks, and Brian Heinzl for their service and dedication to the Pittsburgh Section the last few years during their terms as Section Directors. I also want to recognize and thank the Nominating Committee, and specifically Sam Shamsi for his efforts as chair of the committee to put together an amazing slate of nominees.

Infrastructure in the Headlines

March brought much of the nation's attention to infrastructure when President Biden announced the *America Jobs Plan* from the Carpenters Training Center just outside of Pittsburgh. There is little doubt that the *ASCE 2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure* released earlier last month influenced the President's Plan. The Pittsburgh Section took this opportunity to reach out to local media platforms as the experts on our region's infrastructure needs. We prepared an Op-Ed that we hope to get published in the coming weeks, and were able to discuss infrastructure and civil engineering with Rick Dayton in a live interview on KDKA NewsRadio.

We are also coordinating with the other Sections in Pennsylvania to begin developing the *2022 Report Card for Pennsylvania's Infrastructure*. To that end, we're looking for professionals and students interested in working with a team of engineers from across the state to gather background information from professional societies, non-profit associations, as well as local, State and Federal agencies for each of the Report's categories. Anyone interested should contact the Section's Government Relations Committee chair, Greg Scott, at scottgf@cdmsmith.com or Pennsylvania Report Card Committee co-chair, David DiGioia, at ddigioia@mcmahonassociates.com.

Diversity & Inclusion

I am over the moon with excitement to announce that Darnetta Craig, a Senior Project Manager at Colliers Engineering, has volunteered to chair the Pittsburgh Section's Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Please join me in welcoming Darnetta to the ASCE Board. I encourage you to contact Darnetta at darnetta.craig@colliersengineering.com or me about participating in our Diversity & Inclusion Committee if you are interested in helping raise awareness of important issues, and challenging our members to be agents of positive change in advancing diversity and equity within the civil engineering profession and across our region.

Institute Events

As all of that wasn't exciting enough, I'm also pleased to share that there's something for everyone on the May Calendar of events! The Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI) is co-hosting the 11th Annual Sustainability Conference on May 6th and

7th with our long-standing partner [Sustainable Pittsburgh](#). *Building and Planning for a Healthy and Equitable Future* is a two-day event that will bring national and local experts together to discuss current challenges, opportunities, and strategies for how the Pittsburgh region can ensure a healthy and safe environment for all of its current residents and future generations. Please register [here](#) to attend the Sustainability Conference.

Our newly established Utility Engineering & Surveying Institute (UESI) and the National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) have partnered to deliver a virtual symposium on "*Leading the Way to Smarter Utility Engineering Design & Construction Damage Prevention*". This inaugural event by UESI will provide important insights and perspectives on utility conflict coordination and management, along with an opportunity to ask questions of experts during interactive sessions and learn how the industry is changing to improve utility engineering design and construction damage prevention. You can even earn up to 6 professional development hours and while networking with members of this exciting industry. [Registration is now open for this event!](#)

As I reflect on all that has changed in our personal and professional lives since last Spring, I thank all of you for your continued and active participation in ASCE and for your support of my efforts to lead the Section during that time. I have a couple more weeks before I pass the gavel along to Erin Feichtner and am excited to be part of her administration this coming year. In the meantime, please contact me at jshimko@mckimcreed.com if you have any questions, or just want to have a discussion about the weather.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Shimko

President

ASCE – Pittsburgh Section

