

MRS's Vibrant Future

It is truly a great privilege to write this letter as the new president of the Materials Research Society. It is both an honor and a little daunting to be in this position. After just attending the 2009 MRS Fall Meeting in Boston, I am energized by the success of that meeting, not only because it was the largest in MRS history, with 6200 total attendees, but because of the diversity of subjects and great energy of the meeting. As always, the Meeting Chairs working with the symposium organizers created a wonderfully successful venue for scientific interaction and advancement.

Over the past few years, MRS has undergone a number of organizational changes driven by former MRS presidents Cynthia Volkert and Shefford P. Baker. The largest of these changes is the hiring of Todd Osman as the executive director and the restructuring of the MRS governance configuration to be more functional and sustainable than before. This includes the development of an integrated way to charter the activities of the Board of Directors, headquarters, and the operating committees of the Society. Many of these changes were implemented last year. While many are not directly visible, they have the net value of allowing the Society to accomplish its strategic objectives more efficiently. These activities are occurring in a number of key areas and can be seen in the Society's "Strategic Guidance Document 2010" (www.mrs.org/sdgi). While this document will change every year, changes will be derived from the Society's four key strategic objectives, which were described in LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT in the November 2009 issue of *MRS Bulletin* (p. 781):

- expand as the Materials Gateway for global communication and knowledge dissemination;
- support the sustainability of the field of materials research;
- proactively foster materials solutions to improve the quality of life; and
- enhance the MRS community through expanding membership, diversity, and worldwide networking.

To achieve these objectives, a number of Society-wide strategic initiatives have been developed both to improve our existing offerings as well as to look to the future to new endeavors. Key to this process is to maintain the spirit, quality, and core values of MRS while offering our members worldwide more of what they want and need as materials researchers. Coupled to this is a desire to be a good citizen world-



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wide by facilitating interactions of materials researchers, developing new generations of students, and communicating the importance of materials science to society as a whole. We will continue to do what we do best and look to what makes sense for the Society's service to the worldwide materials community.

To do this, MRS has started initiatives in communications and in meetings (our two core products):

- **Communications:** MRS is beginning to develop a portfolio of communication products, building off of its core products of the *MRS Bulletin*, the *Journal of Materials Research*, and *Materials360*[®], and looking at what would serve the materials science community best. There have been multiple task forces established to support MRS growth in communications, with recommendations on next steps due to the Board of Directors as early as the 2010 MRS Spring Meeting. These task forces were derived by a broad assessment of member needs, market opportunities, and MRS capabilities. They will lead to improving and enhancing our ability to convey technical information through publications worldwide, enhancing our capabilities at outreach and advocacy, and providing career and business tools for our members.

- **Meetings:** Meetings are a core competence of MRS and our ability to provide technically stimulating meetings of very high quality is key to our success. Increasingly, there is a growing interest in diversifying our meetings both in terms of content and location. This has resulted in workshops on specific topics, outreach activities, and meetings on advocacy and intersociety collaboration. In addition, we have begun to collaborate on meetings internationally, with the most distinguishable result being the successful joint meeting held with MRS-Mexico, XVIII International Materials Research Congress 2009, in Cancun (www.mrs.org/mex09). We have also held collaborative meetings in China and are planning other cooperative efforts for the future. To begin to address how to decide what meetings are the best investments for the Society, we are developing a strategic intent for meetings and a process for vetting meeting priorities.

Critical to being able to carry through on these initiatives is having an information infrastructure capable of delivering the necessary products. To support the development of a set of greatly improved tools, web and otherwise, an initiative has been launched to vastly improve the MRS capabilities in every aspect of communication and information delivery.

What does this mean for you? In the near term, it means that the Society will keep to its core values while slowly expanding its products. In the future, MRS will be able to meet the lofty goals stated by helping to serve the materials science community in technical exchanges, outreach, and advocacy.

What can you do?

Clearly, to successfully execute these ambitious projects, a great deal of effort will be needed from operating committees, Headquarters, the Board, and members. There are many needs for volunteers at the Society, task force, and operating committee levels. If you are excited about any of these possibilities, MRS is looking for help: Please contact Sandra DeVincent Wolf, director of Membership Development, at SWolf@mrs.org. After all, one of the main reasons MRS is successful is because of the enthusiasm and talent of its volunteers.

Be part of the team... it is a lot of fun.

DAVID S. GINLEY
2010 MRS President