

in the final analysis

"I love to travel, but I hate to arrive."

—Albert Einstein

Relatively speaking, I'm amused by the notion that Albert Einstein loved traveling more than arriving—what an ironically wonderful quality to find in the fellow who gave us the idea of time dilation, with clocks in different vehicles ticking at different rates, depending on velocity and gravity. I personally experienced a time-dilation effect of sorts just a few days ago when attending what I liked to call "TMS Week" in Washington, D.C. To outward observers, I was loafers-on-the-ground for five days. Experientially, however, it felt more like five minutes as every moment was packed with compelling and engaging activities that whisked past in a blink. We had a major workshop, Congressional visits, a Board of Directors meeting, and a board strategic planning session. And, as a special added bonus for participants, I even lost my voice for a day.

The centerpiece of TMS Week was the much-anticipated First TMS Summit on Creating and Sustaining Diversity in the Minerals, Metals, and Materials Professions (DMMM1). While other TMS members and staff will do a far better job of communicating the excitement and enthusiasm that we experienced at the Diversity Summit, I am happy to anecdotally report that the event was a clear success. Elizabeth Holm, our current TMS Past President and the lead organizer for DMMM1, reflected on the event's potential impact when she summarized the week's prevailing themes on the final day and reminded participants to stay tuned for the release of the post-event toolkit and report via the summit web site. One of the recurrent themes of DMMM1 speakers was the value of mentorship in navigating diversity and inclusion issues. Dr. Holm provided attendees some of that very thing by asking each person to advocate with a supervisor on behalf of one of the good ideas shared during the summit. That do-something tactic follows on from another recurrent summit theme—we can all make a difference no matter what organizational rung we occupy. We have the ability to model behavior, to make suggestions, and to simply ask if we can try something different. The smallest things can precipitate the biggest changes.

In the spirit of small gestures making a big difference, the TMS Public and Governmental Affairs Committee arranged meetings at the end of DMMM1 between TMS leadership and Congressional staffers. Our message was to acquaint U.S. leaders with the fact that TMS is a non-political, objective organization of 12,000+ members who are available to provide unbiased advice on the science and technology of minerals, metals, and materials. We also commented on the importance of not underfunding conference attendance by government scientists and engineers. Uniformly, we felt good about these meetings, so I expect to join with TMS volunteers in the near future to make similar outreach.

TMS Week concluded with our board convening for strategic planning. No room to cover that now, but the finished plan should be complete by the time that you read this. I can preview that it shouldn't surprise anyone to learn that diversity and inclusion feature prominently in the TMS 2018 Strategic Plan. I suspect that the week's best outcomes may have been partially inspired by the fact that we were largely ensconced at the National Academies Building. Appropriately, it is also home to the Albert Einstein Memorial.

Looks like we were all in the right space and time.

JOM

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"We can all make a difference no matter what organizational rung we occupy."



Five TMS presidents attended the DMMM1 summit as Albert Einstein looked on approvingly. From left to right, Executive Director James Robinson, 2015 President Patrice Turchi, 2013 President Elizabeth Holm, 2005 President Tresa Pollock, 1999 President Wayne Jones, and 2014 President Hani Henein.