

June 2020

Dear Members,

As Pennsylvanians begin returning to work and business open their doors, the cloud of uncertainty still hovers over the Keystone State and our great Nation. The energy that has been released from the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement in Minneapolis is revolutionary. My second letter to you comes at a time of pain, grief and confusion for so many. It also comes at a time of transition, growth and enlightenment as we critically reflect on our civil systems and personal beliefs and actions. In May's letter I stated that my priority is to provide support, encouragement, and hope to all of you. This priority has only been reinforced by the needs in our communities.

I want to be crystal clear and will not dilute this message: Racism in any and all forms and manifestations is wrong, is ugly and must be dismantled. As engineers, we are often reluctant or hesitant to voice opinions on social issues. Today I echo the statement made by Society leadership in the letter [ASCE Affirms Support for Racial Justice](#), "We urge all members of our professional community to stand up, speak out and take action against racism and injustice wherever it occurs."

Please read Yvette Pearson's Member Voice article [I Can't Breathe and This is Why](#). Yvette is the Chair of the ASCE Members of Society Advancing an Inclusive Culture (MOSAIC) and the article provides her perspective. I encourage everyone to employ the four actions that she presents to engage the community and enact change.

The Pittsburgh Section is also in search of a chairperson to support the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Over the past decade we have made strides to improve our inclusivity and diversity of our membership, as evident from the multiple "Section of the Year" and "Section Diversity" Awards that have been received. Yet there is so much more work to be done. If you are interested in volunteering or have a person in mind that would be a candidate to lead or participate in this committee, please send contact information to me.

As we enter the summer and everything around us is green (including our Reopening Phase), I want to close with a challenge. Next week, the Section will gather virtually for our annual Strategic Planning Meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for every committee, institute, and student group to present their goals, plans, and budgets for the year ahead. I challenge all of you to take some time this month to reflect on your personal goals and aspirations. Maybe you made a New Year's Resolution and didn't follow through on it (I know it seems like January 1st was so long ago). Perhaps you planned to enroll in a training course, or to gain a certification, or even start on an advanced degree but were side tracked by work or the pandemic. Your goal could even be as simple as to read a book that has been on the shelf for six months. Change is

hard. There will always be barriers and competing priorities, but my challenge to you is to act. I hope that we all are able to do at least one thing that makes a positive change this month.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in ASCE. I continue to seek your guidance to help the Board govern our activities. Please feel free to contact me anytime at jshimko@mckimcreed.com. Until next month, I wish you all a happy and healthy summer!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Shimko

President

ASCE – Pittsburgh Section