

From the Desk of the Young Leaders Committee

2005 TMS Young Leader Committee Officers:

- Raj Vaidyanathan, *Chair*
- Al Csontos, *Vice Chair*
- Ellen K. Cerreta, *Secretary*
- Jud Ready, *Past Chair*

The Joint JIM/TMS Young Leader International Scholar Program

The leaders of TMS and The Japan Institute of Metals (JIM) have announced an exchange program whereby selected members present papers at the international sessions of each society's meetings. JIM holds meetings twice a year, and the technical divisions offer five to ten symposia on selected topics during these meetings. TMS holds its Annual Meeting in the spring and its MS&T conference in the fall. The conferences cover a broad spectrum of topics. It is expected that TMS will annually select one or more young members, age 35 or under, to be International Scholars to attend and present at one of the JIM meetings. JIM will do the same, sending International Scholar(s) to either the TMS Annual Meeting or the MS&T meeting. The chosen International Scholars will also spend a few days visiting selected industrial facilities, research labs, and/or universities. Stay tuned to *JOM* and the Young Leaders web site (www.tms.org/YoungLeaders/YoungLeaders.html) for further information.

Decisions, Decisions . . . Beginning Your Materials Career

You have your degree. Now what? There are a lot of possibilities: graduate school, doctoral programs, or employment in academia, industry, or government. Here, present and past officers of the TMS Young Leaders committee talk about how they dealt with these decisions early in their careers.

Q. What advice would you offer to young professionals deciding how to use their materials degrees?

Nik Chawla, Arizona State University, 2003 Chair of the TMS Young Leaders Committee: Making career-based decisions is always difficult. Students are often under the impression that one "wrong" decision will affect their careers for the rest of their lives. That's really not the case! The first thing to do is to find out what excites you. Do you enjoy the applied side or fundamental side of research? Do you enjoy working with people or primarily by yourself? Would you rather do hands-on lab work or work primarily in an office setting? Based on the answers to these types of questions, you can find out what your passion is. Once that's done, you can decide what the course of action should be (e.g., graduate school or getting a job). If you decide to go to graduate school, it's a win-win situation. You're learning new things, getting more experience, networking with new people, and enhancing your educational credentials.

Al Csontos, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 2005 Vice Chair of the TMS Young Leaders Committee: Don't shortchange your career in the long run by going after the big bucks right after school. In the end, your advanced degrees will always pay off and you'll feel a sense of accomplishment without regrets.

Jud Ready, Georgia Tech Research Institute, 2004 Chair of the TMS Young Leaders Committee: I would offer the advice to follow your "gut" instinct on what is right for you. The individual must make the decision based on their individual circumstances. One thing that drives me crazy is when people use grad school as their fall-back option, so that if they don't get a job offer or suddenly become unemployed, they go to grad school instead. Those students are often unable to complete the graduation requirements; the student wasted two years of their life and has nothing to show from it other than perhaps student loans. You should be committed to grad school (be it MBA, law, medical, or Ph.D.) right from the start. In that way success is more likely assured.

Q. How did you handle these decisions when you were starting out in the materials field?

Chawla: My situation was a little bit different from most students, because I grew up as the son of a famous professor in MSE (Krish Chawla at the University of Alabama at Birmingham). As such, I spent a good amount of time with him in his office and laboratory. I learned about exciting things going on in materials science. In graduate school, at the University of Michigan, I really enjoyed fundamental research. All this was more than enough to convince me that life as a professor was what I wanted to do! The key for students is to realize that your job should be more than an 8-to-5 day-to-day activity, it should be your passion. Finding your passion may not be immediate, but when you do, it's highly gratifying.

Csontos: After getting my bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in mate-

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**The Alliance of AIST,
ACerS, ASM, and TMS:
Young Leader's Luncheon
Presentation at MS&T '05**

Date: Tuesday, September 27, 2005

Time: 12:00–2:00 p.m.

Location: David L. Lawrence
Convention Center,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Young Leader's Committee will sponsor a panel discussion featuring representatives from four of the sponsoring societies of the Materials Science & Technology 2005 (MS&T '05) meeting, to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 25–28. The panel will consist of:

- Dan Thoma, *TMS*
- John Marra, *the American Ceramic Society (ACerS)*
- Phillip Bretz, *ASM International*
- Mark Blankenau, *the Association for Iron & Steel Technology (AIST)*

The speakers will present their perspectives of the new alliance of the four societies for the fall MS&T meeting and the Material Advantage Student Program. The discussion will specifically focus on the benefits this new alliance has for student and professional members of each of these societies. The short presentation will be followed by an interactive panel discussion. Optional box lunches may be purchased via the MS&T '05 registration form. Attending the discussion is free to MS&T registrants.

**Next Young Leaders
Committee Meeting**

Date: Sunday, September 25, 2005

Time: 12:30–2:00 pm

Location: Pittsburgh Omni Hotel,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

If you are 35 years old or younger, please feel free to join the TMS Young Leaders Committee meeting. The committee specifically addresses issues of concern for the early career members of TMS, as well as plans and hosts the Young Leader's Luncheon.

Decisions, Decisions . . . Continued.

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rials science and engineering, I turned down a post-doc opportunity for a job making more money at an academic think tank for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). After some time, I wanted to get back into a more technical area, but not so technical as to be in a lab. While working for the DoD, I let my professional society memberships lapse, figuring I wouldn't be going back into materials. But when I was ready for something more technical, a contact I had met through one of my former society affiliations led me to an opening at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I was offered the position and I accepted it. As a result, I renewed my society memberships and am very active in my local and national chapters.

Ready: I started doing research as an undergrad (junior). I was offered a grad school slot very early in my senior year so I knew right away where I was headed. This fit in very well with my ultimate career plan road map.

I want to be an astronaut when I “grow up” (yes, really—been applying since 1999; got past the medical review last selection—top 5% supposedly—next selection is in 2007). To be a Mission Specialist you effectively need a Ph.D. or M.D. This is not a written requirement (only a B.S. is required), but to be competitive, I had to have a Ph.D. If I can't be an astronaut, then my second favorite job to have when I grow up is to do what I do now—teach at Georgia Tech, which also required a Ph.D.

My career path has not been as straightforward as that simple statement may portray, though. After receiving my doctorate, I elected not to postdoc and went to work for “big” business (General Dynamics) followed by a “small” business (MicroCoating Technologies) and now I have returned to academia. I would recommend that each person constantly be aware of opportunities around them for career (and personal) growth—graduate school is just one of many thousands of life options.

TMS Accepts Applications for 2006 Young Leader Interns

For TMS members just beginning their careers, becoming involved with TMS activities can be a daunting task. The TMS Young Leader Intern program is designed to show young professionals how to become more active in the society and their profession.

“It is an ideal way to integrate new members or former TMS student members, like me, into making professional contributions to the society,” said Greg Thompson, a 2005 TMS Young Leader intern for the Electronic, Magnetic & Photonic Materials Division.

In 2006, the society's five technical divisions will each select one or two young professional members as TMS Young Leader Interns. Interns receive complimentary registration, hotel accommodations, and a \$500 travel allowance to attend the 2006 TMS Annual Meeting and Materials Science & Tech-

nology 2006 (MS&T '06), as well as admission to social functions, division luncheons and council meetings, and the TMS Board of Directors meeting.

Essentially, being a Young Leader Intern provides an all-access pass to the TMS Annual Meeting to see the behind-the-scenes workings of the society and to connect interns with other professionals in their areas of interest.

TMS is currently accepting applications for 2006 Young Leader Interns. An application form is available at www.tms.org/YoungLeaders/yl-app.pdf. The deadline to submit applications is October 18, 2005.

For more information on becoming a Young Leader Intern, contact Chris McKelvey, TMS member services and student affairs coordinator, at cmckelvey@tms.org or (724) 776-9000, ext. 259.