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Hello from your Lehigh Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee! We send out newsletters during the semester to highlight DEI-related events, resources, and activities in our department, Lehigh community, and beyond.

Thank you to John Tolbert for his contributions on our MSE DEI committee in 2022.

This semester we are welcoming a new member for 2023: Joel Garcia, Jr.

(he/him/his)!



We asked Joel to tell us about himself and why he wanted to join our DEI committee:

“My name is Joel Garcia Jr. (he/him/his), and I am a current Lehigh graduate student under Dr. Himanshu Jain currently researching the oxidation resistance of polymer-derived ceramics (PDCs). My undergraduate studies were held at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, TX where I obtained B.S. degrees in Chemistry and Physics, with undergraduate research in fabrication of gold nanoparticles for cancer research. I joined the MSE DEI committee as I wish to be an advocate for the LGBT+ community at Lehigh, as I am cis-gendered gay man, who is excited to take part of a wonderful group.”

Last month, our graduate student representatives collected data from current graduate students about their experience joining the department. They will be meeting with our graduate coordinator Carly Campbell to discuss ways to improve equitable onboarding practices for incoming graduate students. This month, our undergraduate student representative Itzel will be collecting information from MSE undergraduate students about onboarding experiences and requests. Undergraduate students: please be on the lookout for communication from her! Thank you in advance for your participation.

This semester, our committee will be preparing guidance for an equity audit to evaluate student, staff, and faculty service levels. The goal of this audit is to identify improvements to optimize department operations. We will be reaching out to different members of our department for feedback to help us.

The MSE DEI Committee has established two DEI Champion Awards, which will be awarded annually in the spring semester during the SMS picnic and includes a \$200 award! These awards are given to one undergraduate student and one graduate student who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to and/or advanced DEI practices within the MSE department. We are soliciting nominations for these two awards via submission of this form by Monday, March 6, 2023. All members of the MSE department (faculty, postdocs, research scientists, staff, students) may submit a nomination. Self-nominations are also welcome.

Sincerely,

The MSE DEI Committee

Lesley Chow (Faculty), pronouns: she, her, hers

Itzel Esparza (Undergraduate Student), pronouns: she, her, hers

Joel Garcia Jr. (Graduate Student), pronouns: he, him, his

Laura Moyer (Staff), pronouns: she, her, hers

Siddha Pimputkar (Faculty), pronouns: he, him, his

Nicholas Strandwitz (Faculty), pronouns: he, him, his

Jonathan Valenzuela (Graduate Student), pronouns: he, him, his



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