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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.

We are welcoming a new faculty member and Chair of our department: Dr. Ricardo Castro (he/him/his)! We asked Dr. Castro to tell us about his vision for DEI in our department:



"I used to think that success depended on me alone. Maybe because I watched too many Rocky Balboa movies when I was a child (if you don't know him, he's like Creed, but better). But later, I realized that even Rocky had a support group, and only after he connected to it he'd succeed. Excellence is beyond just a single individual effort. This is true in our lives, but also our careers (yes, these are different things), and is also true in our Department. When charged with the most challenging scientific and technological topics, excellence comes from joining forces, and the more diverse these forces are, the better we are. Breaking the pattern and diversifying is the key for engineering to achieve what we can only imagine today. I want to see diversity (in the broad sense of it) everywhere: faculty, students, and staff, so that we can reach our potential. It will not be easy, but we shouldn't shy away from hard work and perseverance, as the goal cannot be more noble. We must all understand that we are all different, with different backgrounds, needs, and stepping stones necessary to be successful. My goal is to learn from each member of our department and provide the most supportive stepping stones so we can all be at the top where we belong."

This month, our undergraduate representative collected data from current undergraduate students about their experience joining the department. Our committee will share this information with the department to improve onboarding experiences for new students. Our next steps include providing 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 collecting information for this during the summer.

The MSE DEI Committee is accepting nominations for faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate student representatives to join our committee starting in Fall 2023. The representatives will serve on the committee for at least one year and are expected to participate in monthly committee meetings and actively contribute to advancing our goals to make our department a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone, please submit your nomination(s) or self-nomination to mse-dei-committee-list@lehigh.edu by Friday, May 5, 2023, at 5 pm ET. The nomination should include a brief paragraph (½ page maximum) indicating why you or the nominee would like to participate and will contribute positively to our mission. No previous experience is required.

If you have any questions, please contact mse-dei-committee-list@lehigh.edu and/or feel free to reach out to our current student representatives for more information.

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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