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Hello from your [Lehigh Materials Science and Engineering \(MSE\) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Committee](#)! We share newsletters throughout the academic year to highlight DEI-related events, resources, and activities in our department, Lehigh community, and beyond.

We are welcoming Casey Dolan (she/her/hers) as the newest undergraduate student representative on our committee! We asked Casey to tell us about herself and why she wanted to join the MSE DEI committee:



Casey Dolan (MSE '25)

My name is Casey Dolan (she/her/hers), and I am currently a junior majoring in MSE! I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the department thus far, especially interacting with and learning from so many unique students, faculty, and staff. Being a queer woman in STEM, I am excited for the opportunity to promote DEI throughout our department."

Last month, we were delighted to host [Dr. Robert Robinson](#), Interim Director of the [Office of Multicultural Affairs](#), to speak in our [MSE Department Fall 2023 Seminar Series](#). His engaging talk titled, "Advocating for Diversity: Enhancing Your Cultural Competence" emphasized why diversity is an essential part of our role as engineers developing technologies for the global population. Dr. Robinson shared compelling examples and personal experiences that shed light on the urgency to enhance our cultural competency, especially in an increasingly diverse nation. We are grateful for his time and willingness to share his knowledge and look forward to having him speak again! Our entire department will continue our anti-racist training by participating in the [EVERFI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion online training course](#) provided by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Health Advancement and Prevention Strategies office at Lehigh.



Dr. Robert Robinson presenting in Lehigh's MSE Fall 2023 Seminar Series.

Next month, the MSE DEI committee will be meeting with our department chair [Prof. Ricardo Castro](#) to provide guidance for a department equity audit. Our committee has been preparing over the past month by collecting information from different groups across the department. For example, our graduate student representatives surveyed their peers about their service contributions in and out of the department. We also collected information from our faculty about undergraduate student research activities to identify faculty who are mentoring undergraduate researchers and highlight our students. This process will also help us build a database of prior and potentially future research projects so all undergraduate students can access this information easily. We thank everyone who has participated so far and will continue gathering information throughout the rest of the semester.

The MSE DEI Committee is accepting nominations for a **graduate student representative** to join our committee starting in Spring 2024. The representative will serve on the committee for at least three consecutive semesters. Student representatives 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, November 17, 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. If you are submitting a nomination, please confirm the nominee is interested in the position. No previous experience is required. Prior committee members are also welcome as long as they have not served within the last year.

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

Sincerely,

The MSE DEI Committee

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

Casey Dolan (Undergraduate Student), 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 (currently on sabbatical in Fall 2023)

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

