

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

The “Dog Days of Summer” are now upon us and the past week definitely lived up to the hot and sultry conditions that accompany Sirius’ journey with the Sun for the next few weeks. As the uncertainty of how our communities will proceed with opening our educational institutions looms, and small business owners struggle with changing guidance and mandates, I write again to provide some hope and encouragement.

Positive Change

Last month I challenged all of you to reflect on your personal goals and aspirations. My hope was that we all were able to do one thing to promote a positive change. Personally, I tried to make a positive change in my awareness of racism through the reading of Robin DiAngelo’s book *White Fragility*. I was made aware of many of my own biases and prejudices. I’m committed to being more aware of my words and actions so that I can engage in useful and beneficial discussions about the realities that exist in society. I’d love to hear from you on what you may have done this past month, or plan to do in the near future, to build a better society.

The Pittsburgh Section is still in search of a chairperson to support the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. I have received interest from a few volunteers but am still looking for more support. We must continue to build upon and improve our culture and our actions in order to create a reality that matches our ambitions. If you are interested in volunteering or have a candidate in mind to lead or participate in this committee, please send contact information to me.

Helping Others

I recently shared a post on my LinkedIn page that presented Arnold Schwarzenegger’s commencement speech at the University of Houston in May 2017. In this clip he states, “The whole concept of the self-made man or woman is a myth.” He went on to say, “It’s important to recognize that at every step of the way, I had help” and that “as soon as you understand that you are here because of a lot of help, then you also understand that now is time to help others.” I went on to locate and listen to the entire commencement speech. I found the former Governor of California very inspirational and found new admiration for his humility and gratitude. This humility stands in stark contrast to the accomplishments of an Austrian immigrant that came to this country with very little and worked hard to become the youngest Mr. Universe, one of the most recognized icons in Hollywood, and eventually the Governor of California. The entire commencement address can be found here: <https://time.com/4779796/arnold-schwarzenegger-university-of-houston-uh-commencement-graduation/>

Speaking of helping others, a few weeks ago, the Section gathered virtually for our annual Strategic Planning Meeting. This meeting provided a forum for every committee, institute, and student group to present their goals, plans, and budgets for the year ahead. I want to thank everyone who participated in assembling plans and budgets and who participated in the *four-hour* meeting! Later this month, the Executive Committee will be reviewing the strategic plans and budgets for the Section. This will not be an easy task but has been made much simpler through all of the support and hard work by our volunteers.

We're here to help YOU

Finally, I want to remind everyone reading this letter that there are still many benefits to being or becoming an ASCE Member. Even though many of our activities and meetings have been cancelled or moved to a virtual platform, there still continues to be many activities and opportunities for you to participate. I encourage everyone to go to the ASCE Collaborate site: <https://collaborate.asce.org/home>. Here you will find access to weekly presentations on a variety of timely topics. I particularly enjoy the **Thursdays@3** series, that as the name indicates, is held every Thursday at 3:00 pm EST. A full calendar of events can be found on the ASCE Collaborate site. Additionally, you have access to 10 free PDHs every year through this platform. Topics range from Architecture to Transportation with over 250 individual on-demand webinars currently listed (I actually counted them!).

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