

December, 2021

Members,

The holiday season is in full swing and as I think back over 2021 I find so many things to be thankful for. The national shutdowns and health precautions in 2020 meant that 2021 was a year of flexibility and adjustment. While I have enjoyed meeting with people in person again, I'm thankful to still be able to have virtual meeting options and the flexibility of working from home moving forward. I've also been very thankful to work in an industry that is stable and has adapted to new ways of communication and innovative ways of doing business. Though infrastructure funding is an ongoing struggle which will likely never have a perfect solution, receiving a national investment boost is an exciting development that acknowledges the importance that civil engineering projects make on equal opportunities and the quality of people's individual lives.

I was recently reminded how lucky I am to be part of a professional society that has valued young and minority members, and welcomed me, a woman in her 30s, as a leader in a historically white, male dominated industry. As an industry we still have a lot of work to do to help welcome and foster Black and Latinx engineers, as noted in this July 2021 ASCE Civil Engineering Source article [Inequities for Black and Latinx engineers](#) continue, report finds. But my hope is that, our members in academia and our outreach volunteers will encourage and mentor high school and college students who represent minority groups to continue in the field and will continue to increase their involvement in the civil engineering profession for years to come.

Speaking of encouragement, I've found that engineers typically do not announce their accomplishments, but instead wait for their agency or marketing teams to list out the innovative methods and successes they've had. So I encourage our members to keep following their projects through construction, observing what was a success and where efficiencies in the future could be made, and sharing with others how well the project turned out. After all, this is the scientific method, as compared to getting caught up in the next set of plans and forgetting about a project once it's bid and out the door.

With that said, and on the heels of the ASCE national OPAL awards (see [Best of the best: 2021 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Awards](#)), the Pittsburgh Section has begun reviewing nominations for outstanding people and notable projects completed in 2021 for our 2021 Section Awards which will be presented February 19th, 2022 at the Engineers' Society of Western Pennsylvania (ESWP). We are excited about our excellent nominees and look forward to celebrating with them and others in February!

Reflecting on 2021, and the events that our Section and its Institutes and Committees have hosted over the year, makes me even more grateful for our members like you and even more excited for our plans for 2022! Until then, may you all finish out the year strong, take some

time off to recharge and spend time with family and friends, and join us again in the New Year energized and excited about the work you are doing!

Thank you for your support,

Erin

