

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

It's hard to comprehend how quickly the perceived passage of time occurs when you are doing something that you love with people that you respect, trust, and adore. But here we are, just a little over a year from when I took an oath to serve as the Section's President. I never could have imagined the events and conditions that consumed our lives over the past 13 months. Many of the challenges that we faced were unique and unprecedented, others reminiscent of outcries for social justice from the not-so-distant past. Through it all, one thing remained constant: our commitment to the health, safety and well-being of our community and the affirmation of the important role the civil engineer plays in protecting our society and improving the quality of life of the citizens of earth.



The Pittsburgh Section honored me with a gift by allowing me to serve as the Section's President this past year. This service was incredibly rewarding for me. I had the privilege to work with some of the region's best people, most of whom just happen to be civil engineers and members of ASCE. As a Section, you committed to and helped me to advance the goals that I established a year ago:

- Advance the SMART Goals established during the 2019 – 2020 Term that focus on increasing membership and energizing our younger members.
- Establish a Utility Engineering & Surveying Institute (UESI).
- Provide more Social Based Experiences/Education to our Membership.
- Refocus our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) lens.
- And, a personal goal of mine, to provide a monthly President's Message to discuss our plans, progress, and successes, and of the many benefits of ASCE Membership.

If the measure of success this past year is achievement or progress with those goals, then I think this past year was a great success. Membership has seen improved trends even with the economic and social limitations imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The UESI Chapter was formally organized and has already held its first event (a smashing success, I must say!). I also had success in providing President's Messages, though I must admit that I missed a month or two.

When I asked the section to bring attention to the social, economic and health disparities in disadvantaged communities, I never imagined the events that would have transpired across our Nation. Our section responded in many ways to help advance the goal of providing social based programs for our membership. We were able to find a champion to chair and re-establish the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. And the 11th Annual Sustainability Conference, "Building and Planning for a Healthy and Equitable Future," embraced and advanced this goal like no other event in our Section's history.

In May, the section welcomed a new slate of Directors and President-Elect. I'm excited to work with them and thrilled to have a chance to work with Erin Feichtner, the new Pittsburgh Section President. I know that she and the rest of the Section Board are going to do great things! I am so thankful for the support that I received this past year and I know that you will provide that same level of support to Erin. I am looking forward to beginning the next chapter of my service to the Pittsburgh Section as the Past-Chair. This role will be different for me, and my hope is that I can be a pillar of support to the Section Membership.

In closing, I'll repeat something from my very first President's Message that I believe still has merit:

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"I encourage each of you across our entire membership to think creatively and help us develop a plan that considers ways to best serve you and our community. We'll need to find innovative ways to overcome both real and perceived obstacles that may impact our programs and meetings. Never in history have we relied so heavily on technology to perform basic daily tasks, and never before have we had these tools available to allow us to persevere as we have over the past months. I am excited and optimistic to see how society will evolve and embrace new ways to accomplish tasks both professionally and personally."

Thank you all for your never-failing support and involvement in ASCE. I wish you all a happy and healthy summer season. Please feel free to contact me anytime at jshimko@mckimcreed.com.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Shimko
Past President
ASCE – Pittsburgh Section