

The Materials Research Society recognizes that diversity drives innovation, excellence, and new discoveries. We charge our membership and leadership to engage all demographic groups worldwide in advancing science and technology to improve the quality of life.



Kristi S. Anseth
2016 MRS President

Embracing and celebrating diversity

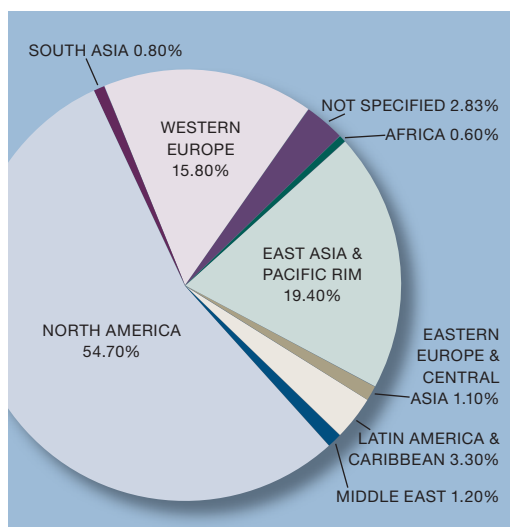
That is the MRS Diversity Statement, and for both MRS and me, these are powerful and meaningful words. They are tied to our core values and our strategic goals, and should be embedded into every facet of our Society.

As I mentioned in my July “Letter from the President,” our membership includes women and men from more than 90 countries, and they bring with them a rich and diverse background of skills, knowledge, and viewpoints. Our goal is to embrace these differences, learn from one another, and draw on the wisdom of a membership that reflects the community we serve. Of course as scientists, we’re also interested in data, statistics, and results, so perhaps this is a good time to look at our diversity “report card” by the numbers.

Membership by Region: 52% reside in the US • 48% reside outside the US

In the very first meeting of the Materials Research Society, we stressed our hope that MRS would become the international society in interdisciplinary materials research.

Rustum Roy, Founding Member of MRS

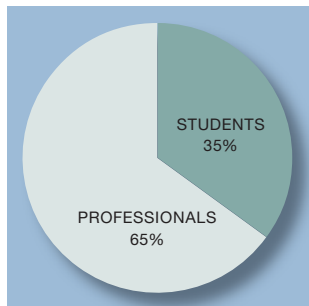


When we say that MRS is an international society, we mean it. Almost half of our members (48%) and 35% of the MRS Officers/Board of Directors reside outside the United States. Membership from East Asia and the Pacific Rim is our largest growth segment. And we’re seeing increased numbers from Africa. These are stats we embrace and celebrate, but to really make a difference, we’re working on ways to better serve and engage our members from all corners of the worldwide community.



Through the Materials Research Society Foundation, for example, we have launched our developing-country initiatives—offering free and discounted electronic membership for students and professionals in low- and lower-middle income countries. Invited speakers from developing countries may also apply for special funding to reimburse travel expenses to MRS Spring and Fall Meetings. The goal is to provide a framework for these researchers to connect and collaborate with colleagues with whom they might never otherwise have the chance.

Student Membership: 35%

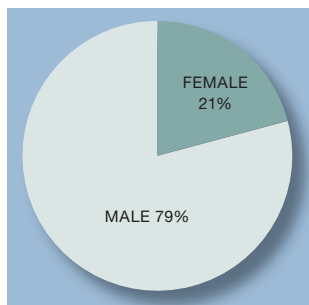


Our student membership has also grown significantly over the past several years and has now reached 35%. Even more impressive, 90% of these are doctoral students. These students truly represent the future of our Society and our profession.

Through our continuum of broader impacts programming and professional development sessions at MRS Meetings, the Graduate Student Awards Program, a University Chapter Program that is now international in scope (20% of our 100+ chapters are located outside the United States), and so much more, MRS is dedicated to preparing students for future professional and leadership roles in the global materials community. Through our Foundation, we are also dedicated to broadening knowledge about materials and their impact on society and quality of life. We are

doing this by engaging students at traditionally underrepresented minority institutions and in developing regions around the world, and our University Chapters are playing a major role in this outreach.

Membership by Gender: 21% Female • 79% Male



This is one demographical area where the needle is moving too slowly, and we need your help. In a recent survey,¹ about 20% of US undergraduate and graduate students in physics are women. In aggregate, approximately 15% of US faculty in physics, chemistry, and engineering are female.² By those measures, one might conclude that we actually reflect the community, but that is not good enough, and MRS is continually striving to do better.

The good news is that 38% of our current MRS Officers/Board of Directors are female, and that percentage will increase to 52% in 2017.

MRS is working to improve gender diversity throughout our Society, but we need your input! MRS has long sponsored, at its Spring and Fall Meetings, special breakfasts and workshops designed to address timely issues facing today's women in the materials science and engineering professions—innovation, work-life balance, time management and negotiation, to name just a few. With a look further to the future, many of our Foundation grants have been awarded for education and outreach efforts, where the goal is to bring the excitement of scientific literacy and awareness to young girls and other underrepresented minority students, and to encourage them to consider STEM careers.

But you can help as well. Mentor a young female materials scientist. Nominate your female colleagues for MRS awards. Or encourage them to volunteer or pursue leadership positions within the Society.

Overall, our diversity outlook is good. Is it perfect? No. We acknowledge that there is still much work to do, and we continue to focus on our ultimate goal—to embrace, cultivate, and capitalize on the diversity of our members, and use this diversity as a resource for a dynamic and vibrant future.

In closing, I offer this quote from an unknown author: “Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.”

Kristi S. Anseth
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1. National Science Foundation.

2. Based upon published data from the American Chemical Society, the American Institute of Physics, and the National Science Foundation.

Protect your sensitive samples

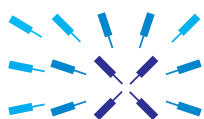
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