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First steps toward MRS's next 40 years

The Materials Research Society celebrated its 40th Anniversary with articles in the November 2013 issue of *MRS Bulletin* and events at the 2013 MRS Fall Meeting. These activities gave us the opportunity to reflect on how MRS has changed over the years and on how we have remained focused on the founders' original vision for the Society. The *MRS Bulletin* articles highlighted our focus on materials researchers and the materials community over these four decades. And, during the 2013 MRS Fall Meeting, we committed to moving forward with a continued emphasis on that founding vision—announcing increased funding for University Chapter Special Projects, sustained annual funding for Grassroots Member Proposals, and free MRS membership to students at institutions in developing countries.

Also during the Fall Meeting, we announced the next steps for MRS Meetings. The MRS Board of Directors recently concluded a multiyear effort to evaluate how our Meetings can best serve the worldwide materials community and our Mission *to advance interdisciplinary materials research to improve the quality of life*. The first tangible result of this planning effort was a greater focus on virtual technologies, leading to the launch of *MRS OnDemand*[®] (www.mrs.org/on-demand/), a platform to engage materials researchers who cannot attend our Meetings. We are especially excited about how the University Chapters Subcommittee, the Electronic Media Subcommittee, and MRS Headquarters have been using *MRS OnDemand* to create interactive events that engage University Chapter students around the world during recent MRS Meetings.

During this planning, we responded to feedback from our members and committees to expand outreach, educational, and other events that have become an integral part of MRS Meetings in recent years, and to increase programming related to “use-inspired,” industry-relevant research. The MRS Broader Impacts Program Development Subcommittee was formed to coordinate member-driven, grassroots “non-symposia” programming at our Meetings. And the Board of Directors has now embarked on another multiyear effort to better understand how MRS can serve the needs of industry, which, in turn, will add value for *all* members.

The Meetings Committee and the Board recognized that implementing all three of these new initiatives would directly affect our Meetings. Most notably, there was a need for enhanced information technology services to support *MRS OnDemand*, and for additional meeting space that would serve existing technical programming and also provide maximum flexibility for expanding “broader impact” and “use-inspired” activities.

As a result, MRS recently conducted surveys of MRS Spring and Fall Meeting attendees. Some of the results were extremely encouraging—a majority of attendees liked the size of the Meetings and found them to be extremely valuable and successful in representing the breadth of the materials field. However, almost 60% of the Spring Meeting survey respondents indicated that the current logistics in San Francisco—in particular, the physical footprint for the technical sessions and events now spanning three separate venues—adversely impact their meeting experience and networking opportunities. In response to this feedback, and after

comprehensive research by a task force charged with investigating venue options, it was concluded that the current venue could not provide the meeting experience the MRS Meeting attendees desire and it was decided that the MRS Spring Meetings should relocate to Phoenix, Arizona, beginning in 2016.

After extensive deliberation, the Board of Directors endorsed the move to Phoenix, as the new venue and associated facilities will allow MRS to address the following issues:

1. Respond to our attendees, improving Meeting quality and networking opportunities by hosting the entire program and exhibit under one roof.
2. Respond to Meeting attendees who want broader impact and industry-relevant programming.
3. Further the MRS goal of better engaging materials researchers, especially students, who cannot attend the Meeting by providing state-of-the-art information technology for live streaming and content recording.
4. Respond to the #1 “non-programming” request from Meeting attendees—reduced hotel rates—saving the average attendee a minimum of \$200 over a four-night stay with the lower hotel rates in Phoenix.

For 20 years, San Francisco has been a great host for the MRS Spring Meeting and will always be a special place for MRS and its members. MRS has had a great relationship with the venues and the city. We express our appreciation to them for many good years.

Moving forward, we are excited about the opportunity to serve and engage the materials community at the MRS Spring Meeting in Phoenix. We’re confident that it will improve the Meeting experience and we’re looking forward to a new and exciting chapter for the Society in years to come!



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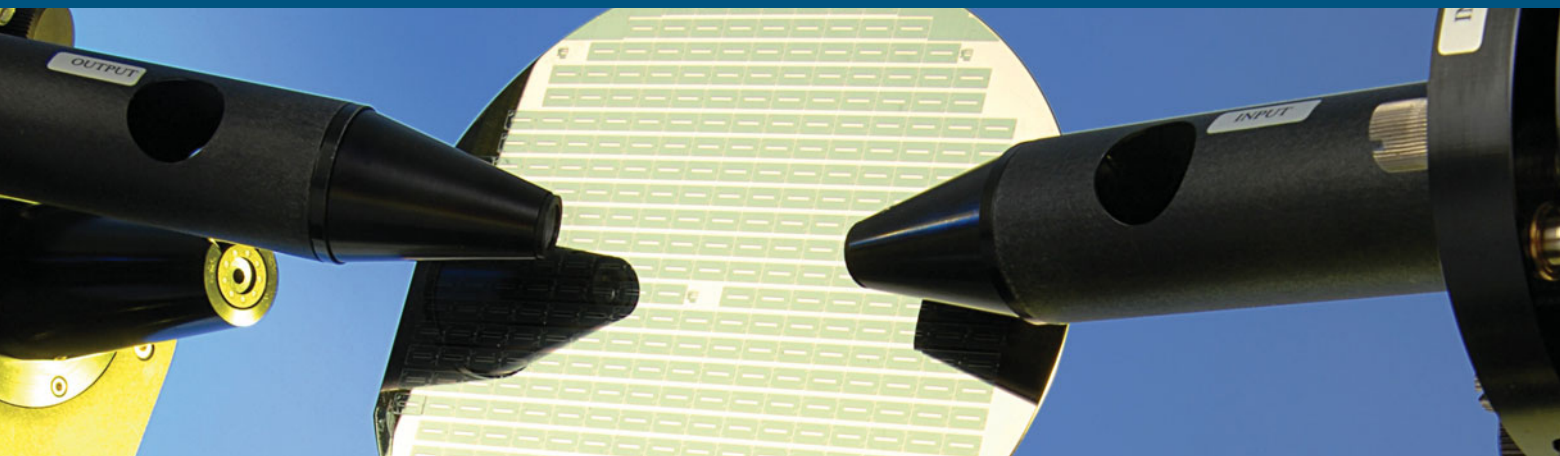
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