



May Meeting: AIChE President Otis Shelton1
From the Chair: “Progress!”2
Mentoring - A Worthwhile Investment Any Time3
Personal reflections on Being A New Hire4
Mark your Calendar5
Contributions to the Newsletter5
Attending a VLS Meeting6

MAY MEETING: AICHE PRESIDENT OTIS SHELTON

<http://fuze.me/24468039> (detailed directions on page 6)

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2014

9:00 pm EDT, 8:00 pm CDT, 7:00 pm MDT, 6:00 pm PDT



The Virtual Local Section is pleased to continue its tradition of meeting with the current AIChE president. 2104 President Otis Shelton is a truly versatile chemical engineer; he worked in manufacturing, human relations, safety, finance, environmental and other facets of industry and still found time and energy to serve the profession through AIChE, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the National Research Council. A key priority of Mr. Shelton’s current AIChE

work is strengthening local sections. We look forward to an enjoyable and informative meeting!

More information on the [VLS Events Page](#)



FROM THE CHAIR: “PROGRESS!”

With the year in full swing, it's a good time to assess how we are progressing toward the four

goals that I enumerated in my February newsletter column. In a nutshell, this year's goals are 1) to continue to provide quality programming; 2) to expand and engage our membership; 3) to formalize VLS standard operating procedures; and 4) to collaborate with other AIChE communities, especially for quality virtual space development.

My assessment: the VLS is having a tremendous year so far! We are continuing our tradition of high quality virtual meetings: to date, the speakers ranged from technical topics (Dr. Richard Wool's overview of green processes for making materials and composites from bio-feedstocks) to professional development (Andrew Tarvin's discussion of the effective use of humor in the workplace.)

Our membership continues to increase: as we go to press, we have 436 dues-paying members located in 29 different countries, with new members still joining throughout the year. As our numbers grow, we turn our attention toward helping our members get involved in our activities and in the Institute as a whole, to the extent their interests and situations dictate. We are seeing enthusiasm and engagement

increase, as well numbers. For example, at our last regular leadership meeting, it was my pleasure to welcome our new Membership Chair, Experience Nduagu, and our new Young Professionals Chair, Shubharthi Barua to the VLS leadership team.

Experience and Shubharthi are planning to lead a session for graduating seniors about finding and getting involved with their new AIChE Local Section after graduation. Activities like these are part of the VLS effort to strengthen not just our section but also other local sections around the globe. This is an example of ways engaged members can increase our collaboration with other AIChE communities while gaining organizational and presentational experience themselves.

We are also increasing our virtual footprint and sharing with other AIChE members: the videos from past meetings and back issues of the newsletters can be found on the VLS website, virtual.aiche.org.

Our SOPs are progressing, resulting in better communications, starting this month, as well as inspiring a new series practical articles of special interest to recent grads, YPS, and those who work with them.

We are increasing our virtual footprint: the videos from past meetings and back issues of the newsletters can be found on the VLS website, virtual.aiche.org.

In summary, we are on track to meeting our goals! Please consider getting involved to make 2014 a great year for VLS, AIChE, and yourself. -- Noah Meeks

MENTORING - A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT ANY TIME

(Part 1 of 2)

D.L. Grubbe, PE, CEng.

Elizabeth J.H. Guenther

Do you believe that your career progress or your achievements have been solely due to your own efforts? If you are like most engineers, your achievements are the sum of your actions and judgments. You probably received some guidance in those actions and judgments; each of us stands on the shoulders of those who have supported us when we needed supporting, pushed us when we needed pushing, warned us, cajoled us, disciplined us and challenged us.

You may identify with a mentor – a more experienced colleague, a college professor, or someone totally outside of engineering; mentors come in many forms. Mentoring can be of great benefit to mentor and mentees alike, but, like a sword that has two edges, mentoring also has some potential downsides. We will discuss the benefits, as well as the pitfalls and how to avoid them. No one will argue, though, that mentoring does not advance our profession, and in that context, we encourage you to be engaged in mentoring, as a mentor, a mentee or both.

So, what exactly is “mentoring?” The definition is very important because the definition of mentoring depends on the person. This article will treat a broad spectrum of mentor definitions and roles. Here are the four common definitions of “mentor”; they cover relationships from

“don’t even know the person” to “want someone who will advocate for me to get me promoted.”

Role Model -- Someone you can learn from often by admiring from afar. You may never meet the person, but you pattern yourself after them, as you deeply respect one or more attributes of their personality or behavior. You may be able to have many role models.

Functional Coach -- A person who helps you with day-to-day work, volunteering, or project activity. The coach helps you navigate the pathways of the environment; however, the normal goal of coaching is independence. You learn the ropes, so a coach is usually important when you are doing something new. You may have many coaches over the course of your lifetime.

Mentor -- A person who gives you guidance of a more personal nature, someone you meet with or talk with on regular occasion, and who begins to know you on a more personal and deeper level. The mentor will give you information and opinion about your mannerisms, style and behaviors that you may not want to hear; however, they are doing it because they care about you and your development. It is also quite normal to have many mentors over the course of your development. These are the people whom you decide to “let in to see the real you.”

Advocate -- An individual, generally unknown to you, who speaks well of you to others, and opens up doors for you with others who may not know you. Advocacy is given; it is rarely asked for. When a mentee requests advocacy directly from a mentor, it can strain the relationship if the mentor does not feel

they know the mentee well enough to do so.

How can a mentor have a good mentoring relationship? First, as the mentor, be sure to set boundaries for the interactions: frequency, duration, media and topics. For example, in mentoring graduate students over the Internet, one of us has been asked to find jobs or to advocate for people who are not eligible to work in the USA, and for individuals for whom she is unable to vouch. Request like this put the mentor in an uncomfortable and potentially illegal position. Not a good place to start! Second, be sure to discuss mutual goals for the mentoring period. It is quite normal, and encouraged, for both parties to have goals. Lastly, a good mentoring relationship is normally mentee driven, as the mentee should be prepared with questions and areas where advice is requested. The mentee may not like all that is said; however, the mentee does not have to take all the advice the mentor offers.

While the benefits to the mentee are obvious, why should mentors bother with mentoring? Mentoring is beneficial to mentors, too. First, you are going to learn something, so stay alert! Second, you are going to make a new friend, if you both work at it. Third, you are going to broaden and widen your network, and you may find yourself collecting valuable information, contacts, and new mentees. Lastly, you are going to be providing a service to our profession. So much of our knowledge is tacit, not explicit, and the only way to learn

is from someone who cares enough to spend the time.

If you have mentored or are mentoring someone, thank you for your contribution to the next generation of engineers. Next month, you will hear from a mentor and mentee pair, as they discuss their mentoring relationship through the AIChE Fellows Mentoring Program.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON BEING A NEW HIRE

Amanda Scalza

As the new hires begin trickling into the office, I have begun to reflect on my own journey through my first few years out of college. To say it has been an adventure is an understatement. After graduating from the sleepy suburbia of the New England coast, I took my first job in research and development in the rural farmlands of central New York. Sooner than expected, I found myself sending my parka and snow shovel to storage and heading for the economic boom of mass manufacturing in the Gulf Coast. Now, two years, two jobs, and two thousand miles later, I hope my journey can bring us all, both recent graduates and seasoned professionals, some new perspectives on transitions through career and life alike.

To recent graduates:

Take the leap and say yes, to everything personally and professionally. I tend to make this mistake myself, and I know it's a common one among engineers. We jump head first into our work and take on as

many projects as our boss offers, while turning down the personal invitations and failing to get integrated into the community we have moved into.

Take advantage of everything your employer has to offer. There are always more payoffs from your company than just the paycheck, whether they are donation matches, discounts, training, or something else. They are there in abundance and meant to make your experience more meaningful. I was able to double the donation to my university with company match funds and my mother was overjoyed at the computer I was able to buy her. No need to tell her I was able to get a great discount through my company programs!

To seasoned professionals:

Understand that young professionals need more than just professional guidance. Many of us are coming into the office and coping not just with the transition from student to professional, but also with moving and with a new culture both inside and outside of work. Expect this to take at least six months before you can truly judge the potential of your new hire.

Don't underestimate the power of a lunch. It can be intimidating for a new employee to ask for the resources that they need to be successful. Sitting down for a quick lunch to benchmark and find where your young professional feels they need support can go a long way towards ensuring that they experience a positive transition into the workplace. Now when I say quick

lunch, however, I still mean we deserve a decent meal. My first boss took me to the Chinese buffet. Come on, guys, I know you have a bigger budget than that.

Most of all, we all should realize that whether fresh out of college or many years into our careers, embracing change can be difficult, exciting, refreshing and best done when we accept the help of others.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Every Fourth Thursday – VLS Meetings

May 22, 2014 VLS Meeting: Otis Shelton, AIChE President

June 12, 2014 VLS Leadership Meeting

Open to all interested VLS members

June 26, 2014 VLS Meeting: TBA

July 24, 2014 VLS Meeting: The AIChE National Elections Information Meeting (with Candidates)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Want to congratulate a colleague? Announce an achievement? Form an interest group, real or virtual? *As space is available, the VLS Newsletter will, on a trial basis, publish professional, non-commercial notices from individuals next month.*

Notices, articles, and other contributions gratefully accepted by the editor at jbrand@unl.edu using "VLS Newsletter" in the subject line. Deadline: May 31, 2014.

ATTENDING A VLS MEETING

Go to <http://fuze.me/24468039> and follow directions. (The “name” requested would be the name displayed to other meeting participants.)

- For audio only: (If prompted, enter the meeting number: 24120303, then press #)
 - From a browser, select the Internet audio option after joining.
 - From a phone:
 - US: +12014794595 or +18553463893
 - International access numbers <https://www.fuzebox.com/extras/symphony>
- Having problems? Follow the meeting link from our website virtual.aiche.org
- Need more help? You can connect to the Customer Support Team or access self-help tools at www.fuzebox.com/support.

Attendance at a Virtual Section Meeting is open to AIChE Virtual Local Section Members, AIChE members and other interested people.