

Failure-induced success at Electronic Materials and Applications meeting in Orlando

The Electronic Materials and Applications meeting in Orlando, Fla., January 23–25, attracted more than 260 attendees, about 90 more than last year’s meeting. It was organized by Bryan Huey (University of Connecticut), Quanxi Jia (Los Alamos National Laboratory), and Timothy Haugan (Wright Patterson Air Force Base).

This was the fourth year for EMA, which is the joint meeting for the Electronics Division and the Basic Science Division. Three new symposia were organized this year, including a symposium looking at interdisciplinary challenges, “LEDs and Photovoltaics beyond the Light: Common Challenges and Opportunities.” The symposium talks were reminders that materials are used in systems and that systems designers and the materials science communities benefit from working together.

An unintended theme of EMA’2013 was failure-induced success.

Organizers first encountered failure when scheduled plenary speaker, Kitt Reinhardt, program manager at the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, cancelled because of federal travel restrictions. Undaunted, meeting organizers trolled through the registration list for a pinch-plenary-speaker and found a winner in Susan Trolier-McKinstry.

The second failure-induced success was an informal “after-hours” symposium titled, “Failure: The Greatest Teacher.” The symposium was held after the poster session and featured only two speakers—Erik Spoerke and Clive Randall—and attracted almost 80 attendees. The speakers gave lively, engaging talks about the taboo subject of flat-out failure—how it happened, what they learned from it, and why it proved to be a good thing in the end.

Organizers are already working on plans to build on this year’s successes for EMA 2014. ■

1 First-time attendee, Nathan Newman (Arizona State University), reviews the program. **2** Lyndsey Denis presents results from her undergraduate research project conducted under the supervision of Jacob Jones at the University of Florida–Gainesville. **3** Between-session networking **4** The poster session and reception provided a setting for stimulating conversation. **5** Bryan Huey (standing) at the Young Professionals reception. **6** Plenary session audience.

