The Society For Biomaterials (SFB) is dedicated to providing a rich and dynamic culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is evident in their involvement with programs for both women and underrepresented minorities. SFB’s main opportunity for networking and education occurs during their Annual Meeting & Exposition.

At SFB’s Annual Meeting, a Women’s Networking Luncheon is held offering a forum for those interested in advancing the role of women in biomaterials. It provides an opportunity for women at all stages of their careers, from students to professionals, to network, exchange ideas, and continue encouraging women in this challenging and rewarding field. During the luncheon, a brief introduction of panelists is followed by a series of discussion starters and break-out sessions; the subject of the panel discussion varies year to year. In 2018, best practices on how to effectively network and promote yourself to enhance career success at all stages was the focus.

SFB also specifically recruits women to leadership positions, holding spots on the Board of Directors, as Committee Chairs, as Special Interest Group Officers, and frequent award recipients. The Society ensures that women are engaged and valued as members, advancing in this growing field.

Another area of concentration for the Society For Biomaterials is underrepresented minorities. Studies conducted by the National Science Foundation and others have concluded that African-Americans, Latinos, Native-Americans, and Native Alaskans are disproportionately underrepresented in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Their underrepresentation represents a barrier to excellence in these fields. For this reason, the Society grants the Cato T. Laurencin Travel Fellowship annually to support underrepresented minorities in the field of biomaterials by providing an undergraduate student resources to attend the Annual Meeting, and to become a member of the Society. The goal of this initiative is to both stimulate and encourage recipients to pursue a career in biomaterials.

The 2019 Annual Meeting & Exposition will also host an Underrepresented Minorities Mixer. This Mixer provides a catalyst for further networking and communication outside of the learning atmosphere. Members will have the opportunity to meet like-minded students and professionals who may be studying and working in similar disciplines throughout the world.

As an additional method of promoting socialization and interaction, the Society also created listserv groups this year with women and underrepresented minorities in mind. These focused e-mail lists provide information that is pertinent both prior to and during the Annual Meeting.

The Society For Biomaterials strives to not only be diverse, but inclusive by fostering and facilitating opportunities for women and underrepresented minorities to grow and flourish in the biomaterials field. Another focus area of diversity is with the LGBTQ population. This year, SFB will host a mixer and listserv to further engage this community as well. The Society continues to advance and offer new opportunities and is always seeking out innovative ideas to better serve these specific segments of the biomaterials community.