Alejandro Cano Trespalacios was introduced to the welding industry at the age of 25 through Jorge Rodalle-gas, treasurer for the American Welding Society (AWS) Chihuahua Section and CEO of Joist Structural Systems. Becoming an AWS member in 2018, Cano Trespalacios has done a lot for the Society in his short time as a member. He is currently the vice chair of the AWS Chihuahua Section, where he is helping to spur changes that benefit the local welding industry. For instance, he has been involved in an effort to encourage general contractors in the Mexican market to require fabricators to comply with AWS welding codes, especially because these fabricators already comply with the specifications of the American Institute of Steel Construction, the Steel Joist Institute, and the Steel Deck Institute, among other standards-preparing organizations.

According to Cano Trespalacios, he is working on seeing a mandatory welding quality on structural blueprints that require [fabricators] to follow the welding codes to their fullest. Through the Section, Cano Trespalacios has also been a part of numerous manufacturing events, such as trade shows and welding summits, where he supports Dist. 18 Director Thomas Holt and helps spread awareness about the importance of welders. Cano Trespalacios is particularly proud of a Responsible Companies event that was held in Chihuahua, Mex. The event included conferences geared toward inspiring local welders.

In addition to his work with the Chihuahua Section, Cano Trespalacios is the USA director of Grupo Cano, Chihuahua, Mex., which is made up of five companies dedicated to the design, manufacture, supply, and assembly of metal structures and roofs. “We fabricate structural steel, joist girders, top roofing, and do erection,” he said. “My day-to-day job is to see how we can improve our companies so we can reach all clients’ expectations.” His job entails meeting with clients to sell products and ensuring project quality, which includes weld quality assurance. His job has allowed him to work with, and learn from, welders and CWIs. He has also witnessed the creation of many large structures, including the welding of 164-ft joist girders.

When asked what he enjoys most about his job, Cano Trespalacios mentioned the valuable networking opportunities, as well as the impact he is able to make on the industry. “I love my job because of all the people I meet in the industry. I really enjoy being involved in the welding world, such as attending the welding summits and being able to support the Society,” he explained.

Grupo Cano is currently working on a plan “to make more Mexican welders and support them through their careers and help them get a job in our company or in any other welding areas that they aspire to work for,” explained Cano Trespalacios. “We have an induction room and are willing to teach people that are interested for free.”

His Section and professional work is fueled by his appreciation of the dedicated welders who play a large role in propelling the construction industry.

“Although I’m not a welder, all welders out there have our 100% support for being such hard workers,” he affirmed. “Nowadays we suffer from a lack of welders. To the welders out there, congratulations and keep up the hard work.”

**AWS Celebrates Its Past by Focusing on the Industry’s Bright Future**

The *Welding Journal* is celebrating its centennial by looking to the future and showcasing the welding industry’s young professionals. From January to December 2019, Society News has profiled AWS members under the age of 40 from each AWS District.

The following section profiles Alejandro Cano Trespalacios, Dist. 18, and Joseph I. Omale, Dist. 15. Visit aws.org/about/page/diversity-inclusion to see member profiles from previous issues.
District 15 Member Profile

Joseph I. Omale

Joseph I. Omale was born with ambition running through his veins. As a little boy, he set his mind on becoming an engineer, and he has accomplished that and much more. Omale’s initial interest in engineering was sparked by his mentor, a mechanical engineer at the Nigerian Bottling Co. in Africa.

“He would take me to his office on Sundays when they would do routine maintenance. I always admired how he looked dressed in the coveralls,” he recalled. “Walking through the plant, it was so fascinating to see all the large machines and how they took them apart and assembled them. I knew I wanted to be a part of a team that knew so much about these big machines.”

Omale’s life came full circle when years later he interned for the same company.

“It was a wonderful experience. As a young intern, it was always exciting to see how the maintenance crew is called upon once there is a problem. We would work tirelessly to ensure the system was back to order. It brought an amazing feeling of fulfillment and professionalism. The feeling of being a person who solves problems fueled my desire to pursue a career as an engineer,” he said.

What first started as a childhood fascination blossomed into his life’s passion. Omale went on to earn a bachelor’s in mechanical engineering from the University of Ilorin in Nigeria; a master’s in mechanical engineering from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, where he currently resides; and a master’s in business from the University of Fredericton in New Brunswick, Canada. He is currently wrapping up a doctorate in mechanical/material engineering from the University of Saskatchewan.

“After my bachelor’s, I wanted to make a difference in the oil leakages resulting from fractured pipelines in the Niger/Delta part of Nigeria. Fortunately, I was accepted to pursue a master’s of science degree at the University of Saskatchewan to work on research areas related to pipeline steels and welding. This area of research has remained my core focus up to my PhD degree as well,” explained Omale.

For the past five years at his university’s Pipeline Research Lab, Omale has dedicated himself to strategic partnership projects between the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the research and development center of EVRAZ Inc., a steel and mining business. Through this endeavor, he has used advanced characterization tools to explore in-service steel failures in different service environments.

“These responsibilities have given me experiences in welding, failure analysis, and inspection as it relates to metallurgy, corrosion, and material testing using different destructive and nondestructive testing techniques,” he said. “I would like to apply this knowledge in the industry as a material engineer or in research and development to continue to solve complex industry problems.”

As a student, Omale has published more than seven technical research papers and received multiple scholarships and awards, including an engineering graduate research fellowship.

However, the scholarship that started it all was the Jadeas Scholarship, which allowed him to attain his first engineering degree at a time when his family could not afford it. Thankful for all the financial support he has received throughout the years, Omale has created a scholarship in his name.

“The aim of this award is to support university students who might have lost their sponsors. My hope is that there is someone who desperately needs this support...someone who could be a solution to Nigeria’s power, political, health, and educational problems,” he affirmed.

Omale also has ample professional experience. He has worked as a graduate engineer at Turning Point Engineering Ltd., Ilorin, Nigeria, and a maintenance engineer at J.arvid Engineering Ltd., Lagos, Nigeria. In 2017, he cofounded Custom Mall Ltd., an ecommerce company headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria.

Today, Omale is both a material research assistant and a summer entrepreneur and business development intern at the University of Saskatchewan. As a material research assistant, he prepares material metallographics and characterizes the samples using advanced machines in the school’s lab. His job also entails writing reports, maintaining machines, and training students how to use lab equipment, such as the scanning electron microscope as well as the x-ray diffraction and electron backscatter diffraction equipment. As a business development intern, he works with Innovation Enterprise, a subsidiary of the University of Saskatchewan, where he carries out market research and reaches out to existing companies.

“I am using my skills as a product developer as well as a business analyst to validate the markets for university-based technologies and finding pathways to its commercialization,” he said.

Omale also finds time to volunteer with the American Welding Society Saskatoon Section, where he serves as treasurer. His primary role is to manage the Section’s accounting, which entails ensuring it is up to date, recording its spending activities, and preparing the end-of-year financial report. He also arranges Section meetings and member/student recruiting activities to ensure the Section’s continued success.

In the future, he hopes to use his vast knowledge and experience to help solve global issues.

“I am looking forward to working in a team that is focused on solving world-challenging problems through world-class engineering research. I am open to opportunities as a material engineer in research and development or in process optimization at mainstream organizations,” he said. “Overall, I would love to use the knowledge I acquired during my MBA and engineering programs to advance organization goals and objectives.”