

Annual Report for 2006 Committee on Careers and Professional Development (CCPD)

Summary

During 2006 the APS Committee on Careers and Professional Development (CCPD) was directly responsible for organizing a very well attended career development session of invited speakers at the March Meeting and created the first incarnation of a new Professional Development Guide targeted at graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. These high visibility products intended to assist Society members in their individual career development are perhaps the most important types of effort the Committee can undertake. Additionally, the Committee successfully proposed and revised APS Council Statement on Career Options for Physicists. This annual report to the APS Executive Council details these as well as other work undertaken by the CCPD in 2006.

CCPD Initiatives

Committee initiatives are projects having a specific goal; aiming to achieve a specific outcome.

Professional Development Guide

During the summer of 2006, a Professional Development Guide for physicists was developed by the Committee. The Guide is intended to be a hand-book to assist the individual in practical career development. The chapters are:

- Follow Current Events
- Learn Basic Skills
- Give Presentations
- Prepare a Well-Thought-Out CV
- Don't Procrastinate
- Set Goals
- Identify Potential Employers and Relevant Jobs
- Do Your Own Thinking
- Learn Soft Skills
- Join Professional Organizations
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The Professional Development Guide is free for download from the career section of the APS website.

Revision to the APS Council Statement on Career Options for Physicists

During 2006 the Committee worked to draft a revised version of the APS Council Statement on Current Employment Opportunities for Physicists (Adopted by Council on April 23, 1994):

“Historically, students with degrees in physics have succeeded in a wide range of academic and non-academic careers. Therefore it is important for physics departments and their individual faculty members to make all their undergraduate and graduate students aware of the realities of the job market and to encourage them to prepare for a broad range of careers. Academic physics departments are urged to reexamine their programs in the light of changing opportunities.”

The Committee wished to update the Statement, making it current and removing any subtle bias in the language used to describe career tracks. The revised Statement on Career Options for Physicists (Adopted by Council on November 5, 2006) reads:

“Degrees in physics have proved to be, and will continue to be, an excellent platform for success across a wide range of career options in the private sector, government, academia, and K-12 education. Physics departments are urged to examine their programs in the light of scientific opportunities, societal challenges and broadly available careers. Preparation should include educational experiences beyond those traditionally considered, including independent research in the undergraduate setting, verbal and written communication skills, teamwork, ethics, and exposure to mentors from outside the academic setting.”

Career Development Speaker Travel Grant (2007)

As 2006 came to a close, the Committee began the process of developing a travel grant program intended to help university physics departments bring career development speakers to their students. The Committee will oversee the selection of the awardees and, if requested, will assist in finding an appropriate speaker. The minimal requirements for the grant are that the presentation pertains to career development for those having physics degrees, that the presentation materials be available to the CCPD, and that the department provide a one page report on their current and future activities intended to foster the career development of their students.

CCPD Product Lines

Committee product lines are those things done on an annual basis.

2006 March and April Meeting Career Workshops

Susan Stringer has once again presented the career workshop at the APS March Meeting. Her background is based on her work as a recruiter for scientific and technical employers. Those who have attended her presentation have been very satisfied, hence her repeated presence at the March Meeting. The one noted point is that she can not address the path to employment at academic institutions. Never-the-less, the Committee continues to enjoy being able to have Susan's presentation at the APS March Meeting and feels the workshop is well attended and valued by the Society members who attend.

Alaina Levine presented the career workshop at the APS April Meeting. This was the second time the CCPD has contracted with Alaina. The Committee felt the workshop at the April Meeting was definitely serving the intended purpose and is valuable to those who attend. However, the Committee decided it wished to investigate and evaluate the extent of this belief. To this end the Committee made as a requirement of the contract that Alaina distribute, collect, and return to the Committee audience feed-back forms (developed by Arlene Modeste Knowles). The audience feed-back forms confirmed the Committee's belief the participants were engaged and generally grateful to have this opportunity.

2006 March and April Meeting Career Flyer

Once again this year the Committee reviewed the March and April Meeting programs and developed a Career Flyer to promote and make visible the career and professional development

activities at these meetings. The Committee produces a single page flyer for each meeting detailing when and where different events were occurring. This is a low effort way for us and the APS to promote career development for our Society members. The flyer is posted on the APS website several weeks in advance of each meeting. We request (and usually receive) an email notification of this posting be sent to FGSA and FIAP members.

2006 March Meeting Invited Session: "Paths from Academics to Employment"

Under the auspices of FGSA and FIAP, the CCPD was able to organize a well attended invited session at the 2006 March Meeting in Baltimore. The session entitled "Paths from Academics to Employment" featured five speakers, beginning with a presentation by Roman Czujko on the employment statistics collected by AIP. The following four speakers presented their views on obtaining employment in sectors roughly defined as industry, government, graduate and undergraduate universities. This session was extremely well attended, numbering in the hundreds. The audience clearly had rapt attention and there were ample questions for each of the speakers. As the Chairperson of CCPD, this more any activity the Committee did this year left a profound sense of having done real good for fellow Society member. Each speaker's presentation is available from the Careers in Physics section of the APS website.

Career and Professional Development Liaisons (CPDL) Program

The CPDL Program is once again active. The CCPD work of the preceding years (Best Practices document, Professional Development Guide, and new APS Council Statement) give the Committee a product and rationale for reinvigorating the Liaisons Program. At the end of 2006, the Committee contacted all the department chairs across the country and asked for them to "assign" a Liaison. The Committee intends to use the Liaisons to assist in disseminating the Committee's current materials and may be an avenue for operating the Career Development Speaker Travel Grant.

APS Website - Careers in Physics

As with the rest of the APS website, the Careers in Physics section of the website was reworked in 2006. The Committee took time during its Fall meeting to review the entirety of the Careers in Physics section of the APS website and outlined all those places changes were needed. In reality the Committee was presently surprised to discover just how well the new career section of the website looked, functioned, and presented itself. The challenge faced by future Committee members is modifying the website without introducing problems.

Acknowledgements

Arlene Modeste Knowles continued as the primary contact for the Committee. Her steadfast support and efforts make the ideas proposed by the Committee reality. The Committee also thanks Ted Hodapp for guidance on implementing our the tasks we choose to pursue as well as acting as the advocate for the APS Council Statement as it passed through POPA and the Executive Council.

Respectfully submitted

For the Committee on Careers and Professional Development

John L. Orrell, 2006 Chairperson