

American Physical Society

Committee on Education

2010 Annual Report

Meetings

Teleconferences took place on February 1, 2010 and August 2, 2010. Face-to-face meetings were held on March 27, 2010 (College Park) and October 9, 2010 (Chicago). Of the 12 committee members (not counting APS staff and others), an average of 10 people participated in the teleconferences and the average participation in the face-to-face meetings was 9. Although most of the communication within subcommittees was via email, there were a couple of subcommittee teleconferences also.

Committee Organization

The subcommittee structure (K-12 Education, Undergraduate Education, and Graduate Education) that was initiated in 2009 showed that it could be effective. Two of the subcommittees took on significant projects, worked out many of the details on their own, and brought thoughtful proposals to the full committee for discussion and approval. The K-12 Education Subcommittee consisted of David Bennum, Jean Krisch (chair), and Mary Lanzerotti. The Undergraduate Education Subcommittee consisted of James Eckert, Noah Finkelstein (chair), Jose Mestre, Gubbi Sudhakaran, and Andrew Zwicker. The Graduate Education Subcommittee consisted of Marvin Marshak (chair), Chandralekha Singh, and Larry Woolf.

Physics Education Research Speakers List

After considerable planning by the Undergraduate Education Subcommittee, efforts are underway to construct a Physics Education Research Speakers List to go along with the Women's Speaker List and Minorities Speaker List on the APS website. At this time names are being gathered for the list, with the Physics Education Research Leadership and Organizing Committee (PERLOC) doing the work.

Award to Physics Departments

Plans were finalized by the Undergraduate Education Subcommittee for CoE to establish a new award to recognize departments and programs that support the education mission of the APS at the undergraduate level. This Excellence in Undergraduate Physics Education Award was approved by the APS Council at its November meeting. Programs will be recognized for a 3-year term, noted on the APS website, be awarded a plaque, announced in APS News, and recognized at an annual meeting for their commitment to inclusive, high quality education for undergraduate students. This new award will be announced in 2011 and given for the first time in 2012.

Review of APS Education Website

Several discussions were held to help redesign the APS Education website. Identifying the audience and deciding what should be communicated were singled out as crucial questions. The undergraduate portion of the website has been redesigned and work is ongoing on the high school portion.

2nd Graduate Studies in Physics Conference

The Graduate Education Subcommittee initiated the planning for the 2nd Graduate Studies in Physics Conference to be held in the fall of 2011 at College Park. The conference chairs are Chandralekha Singh and Marvin Marshak from the CoE subcommittee on graduate education, but they are working with representatives of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) and the APS Forum on Graduate Student Affairs (FGSA) in the organization process. This conference will be mainly for Directors of Graduate Studies, but graduate students and representatives from industry will also be in attendance. Advisory and Steering Committees are already at work, and a proposal has been submitted to NSF. Non-academic careers will be a major topic at the conference.

Contacts with Other APS Units

Since there is significant overlap between the interest areas of CoE and the Committee on Informing the Public (CIP), it was agreed that each committee would have representation from the other committee at its meetings. As a first step in this direction, a CIP representative attended the October CoE meeting in Chicago. A CoE representative will be at the January 2011 CIP meeting in Miami. Efforts are also underway for possible representation from FGSA at CoE meetings. APS Head of Public Outreach Becky Thompson also attended the October CoE meeting to bring the committee up to date on current and planned activities within her department.

Department Review Website

After considerable discussion within the Undergraduate Education Subcommittee, it was decided that a resource for physics departments conducting reviews should be added to the APS website. Since AAPT has a history of doing some of this, this will be a joint project. Rather than providing the mechanism for a review sanctioned by APS/AAPT, the website will contain resources for departments to use. Examples include suggestions on the composition of the review team, a possible schedule for the visit, and a database of possible reviewers. A request for the design of the website has been made, once done it will be tested by CoE members and others, after which it will go live. The undergraduate education subcommittee will monitor the material on the website including the database of possible reviewers.



Peter J. Collings
Chair