



Committee on Minorities in Physics
of the American Physical Society
One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740

Annual Report for January 2006 – December 2006

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COM 2006

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It was a pleasure serving as Chair of the APS Committee on Minorities (COM) in Physics. Our main activities for 2006 included selection of the recipients of the APS Scholarship for Minority Undergraduate Physics Majors and planning the COM sponsored invited sessions at the March 2007 and April 2007 meetings of the APS. Highlights of our activities for 2006 and plans for the coming year are given below.

Scholarship for Minority Undergraduate Physics Majors awarded in 2006

The applicant pool for the Scholarship continues to be impressive. Seventy-five applications for new scholarships and fourteen applications for renewals were received for the academic year 2006 - 2007. The Committee was pleased with the academic performance and the curriculum followed by the APS scholars during the first year of the award. All applications for scholarship renewals were awarded. Thirteen new awards were made, which is a selection rate of about 17%. COM members again served as co-mentors to the recipients and have kept in close contact with the students providing guidance and resources.

COM Sponsored Invited Sessions at the March and April 2007 Meetings

The COM sponsored invited sessions at the March and April APS which were organized by James Dickerson and William Barletta, respectively. These sessions feature minority speakers with a special emphasis on providing opportunities for young minority physicists to present invited talks at a main APS meeting. The theme of the COM sponsored session at the March meeting was "Minorities in Medical Physics", and the session theme at the April meeting is "Opportunities for Ultra-fast Science at New Light Sources & Beamlines". The talks in both sessions will be posted on the COM website.

Site Visits

There were no new site visit requests this year. However, there was one outstanding request that the Committee concluded that further consideration by COM was not warranted.

Other Activities

COM continues to respond to inquiries from APS members and the larger physics community regarding ethnic diversity in the community and within APS. To this end, COM has spent time understanding the APS Fellowship and Awards process in light of questions from the minority community. Going forward, COM will explore strategies for increasing the number of minority fellows and award recipients. Additionally, COM has been compiling a list of "Tips" or "Good Suggestions" for departments to recruit, hire, and support minority faculty which should be posted online this year. COM drafted and sent a letter to Xavier University in support of their commitment to maintaining the physics department, which has been a leading producer of African American physics bachelors, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. COM has also spent time working on a letter and survey of Graduate Department Chairs regarding their recruitment and retention efforts for minority students. Final edits are now underway and these documents will be sent to the chairs shortly. The results will be posted online. Finally, as part of the website redesign efforts, COM reviewed the content on the COM web pages in the old APS website and made recommendations regarding the content for the minority pages in the new APS website.

Looking Ahead

A central goal of the COM is to develop and implement strategies for increasing the diversity of the field. To this end, the Committee has opened discussions with representatives from the Education and Human Resources and the Mathematics and Physical Sciences divisions at the National Foundation on how COM might work with the NSF on this common goal. The outreach materials designed to target minority students will be ready for distribution within the next calendar year. The COM will also suggest a new diversity statement for the APS in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Calvin R. Howell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Calvin R. Howell

2006 Chair, Committee on Minorities in Physics