

APS Committee on Minorities

2015 Annual Report

Nadya Mason, Chair

Members: Alfredo Alexander-Katz, Dave Ernst, Angie Little, Edmundo Garcia, Casey Miller, Fernando Camino, Marie Lopez del Puerto, Luis Rosa

The Committee on Minorities (COM) is dedicated to increasing the participation of underrepresented minorities in physics. In addition to multiple online meetings, the Committee held face-to-face meetings in March and October 2015. In 2015, COM undertook three major projects:

1) APS National Mentoring Community

COM worked with APS staff to design and launch a new program called the National Mentoring Community (NMC). The NMC seeks to increase the number of underrepresented minority students who complete Bachelor's degrees in physics. The program identifies mentors throughout the country who can establish a personal relationship with students and provide them with guidance and support as they navigate their academic careers. Mentees are identified by their mentors. The NMC launched in May 2015 (<http://www.aps.org/programs/minorities/mentoring/>) and currently includes 87 mentors and 59 mentees. The program provides support to both mentors and mentees via email reminders and suggestions. The program also sponsors an annual conference. The NMC project will eventually include a needs-based scholarship fund that mentors can call on to assist physics students in financial need. COM is continuing to develop and optimize the policies and implementation of the NMC.

2) National Mentoring Community Conference

COM worked with APS staff to hold the first NMC Conference, which took place at Florida International University in Miami on October 9-11, 2015 (<http://www.apsbridgeprogram.org/conferences/2015/index.cfm>). The conference was attended by over 175 people, and included over 80 students (~ 80% under-represented minorities). With a goal of bringing together students and their mentors to provide professional development activities, share ideas, and build relationships, the conference included workshops on: mentor research, mentor/mentee training, grad school admissions, career development, and more. This is an annual conference, and COM will continue to advise on the conference program and structure.

3) APS Bridge Program, Partnership Institutions

COM is working with the APS staff to select and evaluate graduate physics departments that would like to become Partner Institutions with the APS Bridge Program. The Bridge Program seeks to match URM and other non-traditional students who have completed a BA or BS in physics with graduate programs in physics. Partner Institutions can admit

students with BA or BS degrees directly into their own graduate programs or can accept students who have completed an APS Bridge program. In either case the partner institution commits to provide mentoring and other appropriate support to the students. COM's role is to evaluate and advise departments in providing appropriate support to these students.

4) Ongoing Programs

In addition to the above projects, COM continues to:

- Hold session at both the APS March and April meetings, focusing on topics of interest to URM physicists and those who support these groups.
- Co-sponsor “Meetups” at the March and April Meetings, with the National Society of Black Physicists and National Society of Hispanic Physicists.
- Nominate URM candidates for major APS honors and awards as well as provide members to the selection committee for the APS Bouchet award. COM is also working with the APS Committee on Prizes and Awards (PRAW) to evaluate diversity goals and strategies for APS awards.

Acknowledgements

The members of the APS Committee on Minorities thank Dr. Theodore Hodapp, APS Director of Education and Diversity, and Ms. Arlene Modeste Knowles, Career and Diversity Program Administrator, for their continuing support and unflinching dedication to increasing minority participation in physics. We are also appreciative of Kathryn Woodle, who joined this year and helped with crucial aspects of the NMC program.