

COM Summary & Activities 2001

11/7/01

The Committee on Minorities in Physics recently had its meeting in Baltimore Maryland on October 27th 2001, in conjunction with the National Action Council of Minorities in Engineering (NACME) meeting. This was beneficial to the committee as members were able to meet and connect with key players in that organization. Specifically, contacts were made with the President of NACME, John Slaughter; the Vice President of Scholar Management, Aileen Walter; and the Vice President of Communication, B. Dundee Holt. COM and the APS liaisons have offered to meet with Dr. Slaughter, who was very amenable to coming to the ACP to discuss possible collaborative activities.

The following are highlights from the last meeting and important COM activities:

Greater Philadelphia Regional Alliance for Minority Participation

COM invited Steve Cox, Director of the Philadelphia AMP, to discuss their program at the last meeting. The Committee is interested in working with AMP programs in order to leverage their considerable contacts and infrastructure in order to increase the number of minority students taking graduating in physics. COM has begun this collaboration with the Philadelphia AMP and has resolved to work with the physics students in his program to provide mentoring, advising, and scholarship opportunities. They will also provide information on APS educational resources, such as speakers lists, travel grants, and roster information to the participating schools. It is COM's hope that this relationship will serve as the model for more AMP-COM collaborations.

Site Visit to a National Lab or Government Facility

COM has been invited to do a joint site visit with CSWP to a government facility with about 250 scientific employees. Neither a joint site visit with CSWP, nor a COM visit to a government facility has ever been done. Since CSWP has in fact done one site visit to a government facility, COM is working with them to iron out the logistics of the proposed visit. The visit is scheduled for either June or July 2002.

COM March & April Symposia

COM has organized sessions for the March and April 2002 meetings. The March 2002 session, which was organized by Michael Williams, Clark Atlanta University, is entitled, "The New Face of Physics." This session includes talks on the demographics of minorities in physics; the diversity and entrepreneurship in the advanced telecommunications industry; minority physicists in healthcare, and minority physicists in the financial arena. The April 2002 session, which was organized by Ricardo Alarcon, Arizona State University, is entitled, "The Present and Future Demography of Physics." Although the talk titles have not yet been secured. Talks are slated to be given by distinguished speakers who will paint a picture of where minorities are now in physics and how the picture will change in the future. Speakers are also expected to address the

role of women and minorities in the future of the national scientific competitiveness.

COM Poster

COM has decided to create a poster that will encourage students, particularly women and minorities, to master physics. The poster is expected to be available at the end of this year. It will be sent to all physics departments (perhaps to SPS advisors), AAPT meetings, department chairs meetings, and APS meetings. If additional funding becomes available, it may be possible to send the posters to a wider audience such as to each high school in the country.

DOE Labs

At the end of 2000, Judy Franz assisted COM in collecting data about minority Ph.D. scientists employed at all of the major National Labs. The survey showed that less than 0.5% of African-American, 1.9% Hispanic, and 0.3 Native American Ph.D. physicists are employed at the labs. COM is following up this survey with a letter to the labs sharing the findings with them and encouraging them to take advantage of the many resources/programs of the APS, the National Society of Black Physicists, and the National Society of Hispanic Physicists in order to increase the interactions with minority scientists. It is expected that increased interactions will lead to increased hiring of minority physicists

Email Mentors

The minority undergraduate scholarship, for which COM acts as selection committee and advisory board, has a mentor component whereby the physics chairperson of the scholar's institution must provide a mentor for the student. COM has decided to take a more proactive role in mentoring these scholars by serving as email mentors to them. This will not replace the assigned mentor but is meant to augment the mentoring of these students.

Proposed Letter to Congressman Ehlers

COM chair, Pamela Lucas, and APS liaison, Arlene Modeste Knowles, both attended the Oct. 11 congressional briefing on "Academic Diversity: A Look at Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in Science and Engineering Departments." Representative Ehler addressed the audience and in his remarks he called for changing the culture of science and getting more women and minorities in science. He also emphasized the need to publish more data in order to highlight the diversity problem. As such, COM asks the APS Executive Council, along with the leadership of other Scientific Societies, to formally support Representative Ehlers remarks with a letter to him. The draft letter is attached.