

# **Annual Report of the Committee on Minorities, Ramon E. Lopez, Chair 2003**

The APS Committee on Minorities had an active year in 2003, which included a site visit to Goddard Space Flight Center and sessions at the April and March APS meetings. This report presents a brief outline of the activities of COM.

## **Scholarships-**

COM administers the APS Scholarship for Minority Undergraduate Physics Majors. The competition for the scholarship was very strong, and 14 new recipients were selected out of 96 applicants. An additional 11 applicant renewals were approved.

## **Sessions at APS meetings-**

At the March 2003 meeting in Austin, TX, COM organized a session "Biomolecular Manipulation", and at the April 2003 meeting in Philadelphia, COM organized "Precision Measurements for Industry" (in conjunction with GFC) and "High Energy Density Plasmas - Inertial Confinement Fusion" (in conjunction with DPP). COM also sponsored a reception in collaboration with CSWP and FIP at the April Meeting.

## **Site Visit-**

In December 2002, COM and CSWP conducted a joint site visit to Code 600 (Space Sciences) of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) in Greenbelt, MD, at the invitation of Dr. Jonathan Ormes, Director of Space Sciences. This site visit presented several difficulties, foremost being that the organization of the lab is unlike other institutions that COM or CSWP has visited in the past due to the large numbers of contractors. However, all parties thought that the visit was worthwhile. The report took longer than usual to prepare due to the schedules of the leaders of the team (K. Gebbie and R. Lopez), but the draft was reviewed by COM at the fall meeting and has been delivered to NASA/GSFC. Dr. Gebbie was subsequently invited to attend a Center Visiting Committee meeting for GSFC as a whole and report on the findings of the visit to Code 600.

## **Departmental Reviews-**

Parallel to the issue of site visits, COM discussed conducting different kinds of visits whose aim would be to assist minority-serving institutions strengthen their physics programs, and it voted to include such visits as an ongoing program. Minority-serving institutions play a crucial role in the physics community - HBCU's are responsible for most of the physics degrees awarded to African-Americans, but they represent only a handful of departments. Therefore, by providing assistance to such departments, COM can have a significant impact on the future diversity of the physics community. Two institutions, Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, MS, and Chicago State

University in Chicago, IL, have both contacted COM for assistance, and one or perhaps both will be visited in the coming year. These visits are to be more like department reviews, with suggestions for strengthening the program, as opposed to the 'climate" site visits.

## **Letters-**

COM is preparing three letters to raise issues related to minorities or to commend and support efforts in line with COM's mission.

1. Letter to Ray Orbach. This letter, being prepared by Herman White, points out issues in the DOE with regard to underrepresentation of minority scientists, and the need to reverse the trends that have come to light. The letter also offers the assistance of COM in examining the issue. Both COM and Judy Franz have approved this letter.

2. Letter to NASA Office of Space Science. This letter, prepared by Ramon Lopez, commends NASA on its program of involving minority-serving universities in space science research and education projects. It also expresses support for a meeting to be held by NASA this summer that will bring together faculty from minority-serving universities and mission PIs to build links and increase diversity in space science research. The letter has been approved by COM and is to be reviewed by Judy Franz.

3. Letter to the Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP). This letter, prepared by Kevin Hewitt, commends CAP for its recent council motion calling for the inclusion of visible minorities and people with disabilities into the definition of eligible University Faculty Award (UFA) candidates by the Canadian government, specifically their equivalent of NSF, which is the National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). The letter has been approved by COM and is to be reviewed by Judy Franz.