

Summary session

Summary session was focused on what people thought would be the best way forward. We asked what actions departments could take locally and what APS/AAPT/AIP might do nationally that would help improve the graduate experience.

Actions at the local (departmental) level

- Change the local climate in physics departments to take pride in and support graduate students who aspire to non-academic professions.
- The departmental Director of Grad Studies (the professor, not an administrative assistant) should be visible on the departmental website.
- Pay more attention to the needs of our young colleagues; put support structures in place to help them make a timely transition to the workforce (see many suggestions in the individual sessions). Consider graduate student rights & responsibilities, and consider formal statements of these.
- Encourage graduate students to participate in professional organizations (APS, APS Forum on Grad Student Affairs)
- Continue to focus on creating a climate that attracts women and minorities to physics both as students and as faculty. Such a climate will improve the environment for men, too. An example cited was expanding the issue of family responsibilities (often raised as a "women in physics" issue) to include men and women, and allowing (and expecting) men to contribute to as women do.

APS/AAPT/centralized initiatives

- Explore the possibility of an APS statement on the purpose of a PhD degree.
- Explore the possibility of a APS becoming or organizing a national clearinghouse for electronic graduate application materials (similar to medical schools). Straw poll indicates support.
- Centralize careers information/jobs at APS website.
- Follow up to task force; gather information about what is actually taught in core courses, rather than just names and texts. Also – is this working; are the students learning and benefiting?
- Gather information about comp/prelim exams and publish (in progress)
- APS needs to get funding agencies on board to help improve graduate education. Funding agencies should understand the needs of grads beyond the research project and be willing to contribute.
- Continue communication among DGS: some kind of follow - up to this conference: 3-5 year timescale; implement DGS listserv;
- Ask SRC to find out more about employment of PhD's beyond the post-doc experience. Would help inform departments of ultimate placement of more of the students.

Request from APS to departments:

- Lobbying in DC – Graduate education is, as a practical matter, closely tied to the availability of federal funds to support research and education.
 - * Lobbying to increase footprint of physics on the Hill is via APS Washington office. The most effective lobbying is directed ("research infrastructure"; "increase number of high school teachers") rather than general ("research", "education"), but not exclusively serving a subsection (e.g. "plasma physics"). Contact APS officers Ted Hodapp and Judy Franz or the APS presidential line to discuss lobbying initiatives.
 - * Meet with your representatives or their staff when in DC, and make your concerns known.
 - * Respond to APS requests to write to congress. They make a difference.