

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

Annual Report for January 2010 – December 2010

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COM 2010

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I was very honored and pleased to serve as Chair of the APS Committee on Minorities (COM) in Physics. During 2010 we had a telephone conference on January 6th and meetings on April 12th in Houston, TX and October 11th in College Park, MD. Our main activities for 2010 included Co chairing two sessions at the April APS Meeting in Washington, DC and March Meeting in Portland, OR; Unit Convocation in March; Bouchet Awards Continuation; selection of the recipients of the APS Scholarship for Minority Undergraduate Physics Majors; Initiation of Minority Bridge Program; and the application for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring ([PAESMEM](#)). Highlights of our activities for 2010 and plans for the coming year are given below.

COM Sponsored Invited Sessions at the March and April 2010 Meetings

The COM sponsored invited sessions at the March and April APS which were organized by Lynwood Randolph and William Evans, respectively. Arlene Knowles reported that Walter Massey didn't show up for the session at the March meeting in Portland, OR so there was no talk during the first part of the session. She was present for Anthony Johnson's talk on the Bell Labs Corporate Fellowship Program, which was well done; and part of the DOD talk. The other session, which was co-sponsored with CSWP, was a good session that looked at gender differences for physicists. One session at the April meeting in Washington, DC featured the Status of Women in Physics (CSWP) and on Minorities (COM): Perspectives of Women Physicists As Seen From Academia, National Laboratories, and Industry; the other was APS Committee on Minorities (COM) and Forum on Graduate Student Affairs (FGSA) Co-Sponsored Invited Session: "Mentoring Prospectives of Mentor and Mentee".

Unit Convocation in March

The Unit convocation is an annual of all of the Chairs of APS committees. This year was the first year the COM chair was invited. The schedule included meetings with APS staff personal; an Administration & Congressional lunch briefing and training for new participants and visits to congressional staff personal on Capitol Hill. As a first time participant, I recommend that COM Chairpersons-elect attend this event so that when that person becomes the Chair the lessons learned can be applied.

Bouchet Awards Continuation

The Edward A. Bouchet Award is an APS award given to a minority physicist for his or her outstanding contributions to physics research. From its inception, the Bouchet Award has been sponsored by the Research Corporation. However, recently, in response to the recession and perhaps other reasons, the Research Corporation has decided to discontinue its support of the Bouchet Award. COM discussed the future of the award and decided to survey past recipients to understand how the award has affected them. Based on those results and further discussions, COM has determined that they would like to keep the Award active. To do so, they decided that they would work toward endowing the award. COM created a Bouchet Award Fundraising Committee made up of former COM members, past award recipients, and other high profile members who might use their influence and contacts to raise funds for the endowment. In order to prevent a lapse in the award, the Committee must raise the endowment goal of \$140K by the fall of 2011.

Scholarship for Minority Undergraduate Physics Majors awarded in 2010

For the first time, COM met by teleconference and webconference to make the final decisions on the Minority Scholarship winners. COM was able to select 30 new scholars this year instead of the usual 20-23, because last year the staff decided to reimburse departments for professional development activities for the scholars

rather than send the institutions \$500 for hosting a scholar. This year, only one school asked for a reimbursement, which created a small surplus that could be used for more scholarships. As for expanding the pool, there was agreement to continue to increased number of students (30) for one more year to see if we have reached all the students we want to fund. The applicant pool for the scholarship continues to be impressive.

Initiation of Minority Bridge Program

Ted Hodapp and Arlene Knowles organized the APS Diversity Roundtable to think about the nuts and bolts of working together. One of the other things that came out of it was the APS Diversity Statement. It has served as a starting point for actions. Hodapp noted that the fraction of African Americans receiving bachelor degrees in physics is decreasing. After a lot of discussions at various levels he decided APS could make a greater impact through a Minority Bridge Program (MBP) by increasing the number of minority PhDs generated because the number is so small. The MBP will be designed to be a significant effort that we hopes will double the number of PhDs produced and will sustain those new numbers. One major role for COM will be to conduct site visits. As an initial step, COM members are asked to participate in the Gender Equity Conversations which are conducted by the CSWP. I participated in such a visit along with Catherine Fiore and Baha Balantekin on October 29th at Michigan State and was very impressed with their protocol. Additional visits are scheduled for other COM members to attend.

Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring ([PAESMEM](#))

The APS/COM has applied for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring ([PAESMEM](#)). The award is \$25K which will go to the minority students if we get it. Many minority students who pursue physics, particularly those educated at minority serving institutions or majority-minority secondary schools may find themselves trusted into institutional cultures that are less supportive or nurturing than those which they are familiar. In addition, because of the small number of minority physics faculty, minority students may have difficulty finding role models in physics; they may also feel family or peer pressure to pursue other academic fields. In the course of nearly four decades working on minority issues, APS and COM have consistently found mentoring to be critical to minorities' success in physics at all levels, as they navigate the challenges of a professional physics career.

Site Visits

There were no new site visit requests this year.

Other Activities

COM plans to continue its involvement be at meetings aimed at minority physicists (NSBP/NSHP/SACNAS) as well as work on networking between minority practicing faculty or scientists.

Looking Ahead

In order to provide support for the MBP, COM members are considering going on the Gender Equity Visits and possibly being trained by the people who trained CSWP. The expansion of the scholarship program is still under consideration and will be reviewed in the future.

Sincerely,

Lynwood P. Randolph
2010 Chair, Committee on Minorities in Physics