

Report of the Committee on Diversity for the Year Ending June 30, 2005

This has been an active and very fruitful year for the Committee on Diversity with activities centered on developing, and acting on, a strategic plan for the committee and its members.

I. Meetings of the Committee The Committee on Diversity met on March 11 and 12, 2005 at the Sigma Xi Center in Research Triangle Park, N.C. At that meeting the committee arranged to have regularly scheduled quarterly phone conferences and two of those phone conferences were held in this fiscal year.

II. Activities and Business of the Committee

The Committee on Diversity has written a detailed action plan for both the Committee and the Society that address goals and programs covering the next 5 years.

The Committee organized and led a successful workshop at the Sigma Xi Annual Meeting in Montreal. The workshop was designed to guide chapters to develop their own effective diversity programs. The workshop was an open forum in which exemplary chapter programs and other initiatives that chapter might participate in were described and provided an opportunity for delegates and students to ask questions from chapter members who had developed successful programs.

During this fiscal year, the Committee has once again played a key role in the oversight of a grant from NIH to develop a virtual community for minority scientists called the JustGarciaHill Website. Dr. Robert Dottin, former member of the Committee on Diversity, is the PI for the grant. The JustGarciaHill Website was designed to be a portal to a virtual community of minority scientists and engineers. Although minority scientists are often dispersed geographically, through the power of technology this site provides a special opportunity for Sigma Xi to support and encourage the professional lives of minority scientists. Please visit the Website: <http://justgarciahill.org> to see the many activities underway, read the current issue of the online magazine, Progress, and join in on interesting discussion groups and other activities at the JustGarciaHill Website.

Committee members also assisted in the development of a proposal that was sent to Battelle Memorial Institute. The proposal described the development of a new Sigma Xi - Battelle Memorial Institute prize with Sigma Xi providing logistics for the prize and Battelle providing the corpus. The prize would be for leadership in science and the community to be named after Sigma Xi's president-elect William R. Wiley. Dr. Wiley, who died the day before he was to take office in 1996, would have been the first African American president of the Society. He was also the Director of Pacific Northwest Laboratory and Senior Vice President, Battelle Memorial Institute. Sigma Xi has not been informed of the disposition of that proposal at the writing of this report.

Mentoring continues to be a priority of the Committee on Diversity.

Sigma Xi has been active in MentorNet as an Affiliated Partner. In that role the Society recruits both mentors and protégés for two programs. The One-on-One Program is aimed at undergraduate protégés who will be matched with practicing scientists and engineers usually in a non-academic setting.

The Academic Mentoring Program, funded by a grant from NSF will match tenured faculty members with late stage graduate students, post-docs and early career faculty members. To find out more about how to become a mentor or a protégé, please visit www.sigmaxi.org. About 300 members per year have participated as either mentors or protégés in this program.

III. Chapter Diversity Program Awards

Diversity Program Awards are presented to chapters that have organized outstanding programs that promote diversity within the science, engineering and research communities.

The **Ford Motor Company Chapter** worked to support diversity in science and engineering programs at both the high school and community college level. The chapter hosted Saturday morning sessions entitled Real-Life Decision Making: Managing Uncertainty with Statistics. Program participants included students from Detroit area high schools. In addition, the chapter and Ford Motor Company instituted a new program that gives community college students real-world scientific research experience. Most of the participants in this program are women or students of color.

The **Rockefeller Chapter** arranged for 17 students from inner-city neighborhoods in New York City to have internships at leading research institutions around the city. These students would not normally have access to scientific and engineering internships. The internship program included lectures on research topics.

The **South Texas Chapter** co-sponsored BrainsRule!, a program that acquaints schoolchildren with the nervous system. The school that participated has an enrollment that is 83% Hispanic and 15% African-American.

V. Members of the Committee

Daniel Wubah Committee Chair
Lura Powell
Gail Gasparich

Linda Mantel
Sylvester James Gates
Marie Reyes
Kenneth Cutler

Staff Liaison
Linda Schmalbeck

VI. Comments from the Chair

For this year, one of the primary goals of the Diversity Committee has been to develop a strategic plan that will enable SX to increase the participation of under-represented persons in the sciences. The Committee believes that with the changing demographics in the US, involving a diverse group of people in the sciences is a necessity that cannot be overlooked. Hence, the time to educate and train the next generation of scientists in an environment that exposes them to people with diverse backgrounds and experiences is now. The committee is grateful for the strong support provided by the staff at the national headquarters.