

Report of the Committee on Diversity for the Year Ending June 30, 2008

After a somewhat delayed start, membership on the Committee on Diversity was completed late in 2007. One conference call was held on Thursday, December 13, 2007 and plans were made for future activities.

Committee Goals

- **Workshops:** Because workshops at the annual meetings, sponsored by the Committee on Diversity, have not been held on an annual basis in recent years, it was decided that a primary focus for the upcoming year would be a workshop, preferably one linked to the "Water" theme of the annual meeting. Workshops are an excellent vehicle for educating the members of the Society about issues dealing with diversity and bringing visibility to their Committee on Diversity.
- **Funding:** Funding to support workshops and other Committee on Diversity activities was discussed because of the limited resources available from the Society. As was previously reported (COD report ending June 30, 2000) and continues to be a concern to be addressed, "The committee will work with staff to identify potential sources of funding for diversity activities.focus will be on defining a variety of programs, including some that are potentially fundable."
- **Demographic Survey:** To more clearly identify the diverse characteristics of Sigma Xi members, information will be gathered through dues notices, member e-mail blasts with a request that members update their profiles on the Sigma Xi website and on the nomination forms of prospective initiates.
- **Partnerships:** The development of partnerships with other organizations that have similar diversity goals to those of the Committee on Diversity, e.g., Society of Women Engineers (SEW) and the Association for Women in Science (AWIS), could be mutually beneficial through co-sponsorship of programs, workshops, etcetera.
- **Nominations:** Members of the Committee were encouraged to submit nominations for Society officers, regional directors, constituency groups, committees/programs and prizes/awards, e.g., recipients of the Sigma Xi Diversity Award and the National Science Foundation Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring Program.
- **Web site:** A valuable resource for the members would be a website where newsworthy items about diversity could be posted. It would require the commitment of individuals to work on the site with a Society staff member.
- **Attendance at Other Societies' Conferences:** Attendance at conferences sponsored by organizations that represent underrepresented groups in science and engineering could be a rich source of new members and access by them to the broad spectrum of talent in Sigma Xi.

On Friday, November 2, 2007 at the Outstanding Chapter Programs and Awards Luncheon, Dr. Peter W. Perschbacher, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), a Historically Black University, accepted the 2006 - 2007 Diversity Award for their program which initiated the UAPB Science Fair Expo in 2006. This is a special event which is independent of the regional science fairs. It has been supported by the local community. The intent was to attract high school science projects, primarily from the Southeast Arkansas Delta area. The Central Arkansas Chapter of Sigma Xi agreed to co-sponsor this event, and offer a \$100 award to the best overall science project. Judging for the Sigma Xi Award was done separately from the UAPB awards. Diversity Program Awards are presented to chapters that have organized outstanding programs to promote diversity within the science, engineering and research communities. Nominees were chosen by the Regional Directors based on Chapter Annual Reports and by the new Diversity Award Program. Winners were chosen by the Society's Diversity Committee.

In addition, Dr. Peggie J. Hollingsworth represented the Committee at a meeting on Women in Water held at the Beckman Center, University of California, Irvine on Thursday, April 24, 2008. The keynote speaker, Dorothy Green, founding Director of the California Water Impact Network, and a group of women panelists discussed a broad range of issues dealing with water .

Acknowledgements

The Chair would like to express her appreciation to the members of the Committee for their service to the Society and especially Kathy D. McLane for her invaluable commitment and dedication to the successful attainment of the goals of the Committee.

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