

Report of the Committee on Qualifications & Membership for the Year Ending June 30, 1998

This was the second year of operation for this new committee which was formed through the merger of the Committee on Qualifications and the Committee on Membership in 1996.

Business of the Committee

The Committee met on October 3-5, 1997 in Baltimore, MD. The agenda for the meeting focused on the charge for the committee that was developed at the 1996 meeting: to develop policy issues and make recommendations to the Executive Director and/or Board, with the objectives of strengthening the Chapters and increasing the Society's membership while maintaining the tradition of honor in science and engineering.

In addition to selecting Chapters of Excellence (see below), the Committee Meeting focused on several items:

1. Reviewing progress on action items from the 1996 meeting,
2. Establishing objectives for increasing retention of younger members and addressing the needs of members at various stages in their careers,
3. Setting goals for reducing the administrative burden on chapters,
4. Reviewing the process for selecting Chapters of Excellence.

Recommendations

Through the course of these discussions, the committee established the following action items that were forwarded, as appropriate, to the Executive Director and staff, the Long Range Planning Committee and/or the Board of Directors:

- **Recognize teachers and undergraduates:** The committee emphasized that in addition to recognizing graduate students and researchers throughout their professional careers, Sigma Xi should recognize through Associate Membership individuals who "instill the value of research," who "actively promote research," and who actively demonstrate a "potential for research," including worthy undergraduate students and teachers.
- **Get *American Scientist* into High Schools:** The committee concluded that it is desirable for the Society to recognize excellent K-12 teachers and schools and that local chapters should be encouraged to identify such schools and to include in the recognition an *American Scientist* subscription for the school library.
- **Reduce paperwork for chapters:** The committee heartily endorsed any efforts to reduce the administrative burden on the chapters, particularly in reducing the annual reporting requirements.
- **Refocus staff energy:** The committee urged that the staff devote more time to supporting chapter activity and developing substantive, programmatic benefits that relate to the mission of the society than in expanding the portfolio of "personal benefits" (i.e., discounts, insurance, etc.) for members.
- **Encourage undergraduates:** The committee endorsed a report by member Dan Rubenstein, Princeton, that set goals for increasing Sigma Xi's undergraduate membership: The Society should be visible and compelling by (1) sponsoring lectures, seminars and workshops, (2) initiating and publicizing community service activities (tutoring, lesson plans, science fairs, sciad program, public lectures), (3) incorporating *American Scientist* into classroom activities, (4) providing resources to encourage undergraduate involvement in seminars, (5) providing community service links, (6) providing honor thesis mentoring/advising, (7) offering research awards (preferably with internal funds) and sponsorships for GIARs, (8) recognizing initiation into the chapter via newsletters, hometown papers, listing in graduation programs.
- **Develop a mechanism for disseminating undergraduate research:** The committee reviewed a recommendation that the society develop a web site for posting and dissemination of undergraduate research and recommended proceeding with development of such a mechanism. The committee also considered a proposal that Sigma Xi sponsor the Journal of Young Investigators.
- **Communicate better, support chapters:** The committee requested that staff develop and initiate a plan to disseminate information about successful Sigma Xi programs and the need to facilitate development of such programs at chapters that don't have them. The committee also urged headquarters to develop an option for chapters that are in trouble to get funding and to have access to visits from distinguished lecturers as a means to revitalizing chapter activity.
- **Develop workshops on special topics:** The committee recommended that headquarters, offer resources to assist chapter officers in raising local funds. The committee also recommended that headquarters develop Ethics workshops of varying lengths, put these programs in writing, and disseminate them to chapters upon request.
- **Retain younger members:** The committee recommended that the society consider extending the discounted student membership fees for three years after graduation to anyone who maintains continuous active membership as a student. The committee also agreed that staff should make a better effort to interact with new members during their first year of membership so that the individuals form a relationship with the society.
- **Recognize loyal members:** The committee first identified the importance of recognizing such individuals for their dedication to the society, either through certificates, letters, or even incentives like a Sigma Xi pin after a certain number of years.

Certificates of Excellence

Chapters receiving the Certificates of Excellence at the November 1998 Annual Meeting were:

State Univ. of New York at Plattsburgh
Ramapo College, New Jersey
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
University of Montana
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Inst. of Standards and Technology

Certificates of Recognition

At the November 1997 Annual meeting, the following chapters received Certificates of Recognition for initiating the most new members during the 1997 membership year:

Princeton
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Brown University
University of Texas at Austin
Smith College
Loyola Marymount University
University of California at Santa Cruz
Swarthmore College
Amherst College
Claremont Colleges
Mount Holyoke College
Carleton College
Newark
Ohio State University
Wellesley College

Approved New Chapters

Between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 1998, the following chapter was installed:

Barry University, Florida

Raymond Lutz, Chair, Committee on Qualifications and Membership
Dominic Chan
Meredith Mason Garcia
Terry Kim
Peter D.L. Roper
Daniel Rubenstein
Geraldine Twitty