

## **Report of the Committee on Qualifications and Membership for the Year ending June 30, 2004**

### **I. Meeting of the Committee**

The Committee met on June 4-6, 2004 in Research Triangle Park, NC. The committee's charge, articulated at the Society's 1996 annual meeting, is: 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.

Committee members present at the meeting were: Graham Peaslee (Chair), Hope College; Sulekha Anand, San Jose State University; Kathleen Browne, Rider University; Jan Kolakowski, US Army Aberdeen Proving Ground (Chesapeake Area Chapter); Ruth Miller, Kansas State University; Patricia Pierce Ramsey, Shaw University; John Rimoldi, University of Mississippi; Pamela Willoughby, University of Alberta. Unable to attend was committee member Anthony Iacopino, Marquette University.

They were joined during the weekend by these staff members: Pam Blondin, Director, Membership and Chapter Programs; Lisa Rhoades, Manager, Chapter Programs; Jenny Zilaro, Manager of Early Career Services; Kathy McLane, Chapter Services Coordinator.

### **II. Business and Activities of the Committee**

During its meeting, the Committee on Qualifications and Membership supported the following actions.

#### **A. Share the Honor**

This initiative, developed by staff in consultation with the CQM, will be tested during the Summer of 2004. The goal is to encourage Full Members to share the honor of membership by nominating qualified individuals. The initiative will also test a simpler nomination procedure designed to expedite the process for nominators.

#### **B. Chapter Program Initiatives**

The committee supports staff attempts to develop programs at a national level that have strong chapter components and that focus on attracting and retaining younger members. Such programs developed during this year include:

1. Career Pathways Workshops: A pilot workshop will take place on the day before the Montreal Annual Meeting. The goal is to offer younger members an intensive look at non-academic career options for individuals who are trained as researchers in science, engineering and technology.
2. Grant Proposal Writing Course: After a tremendously successful pilot, the CQM supports a three year effort to offer up to 18 one-week courses on grant proposal writing. The workshops will be offered through chapters, which will realize several benefits for hosting.

#### **C. Membership Issues: Younger Members**

1. Possible New Membership Category: The committee considered a proposal from Tom Wade, president of the Tampa Bay Chapter, that the Society introduce a category of membership for undergraduate students. After much discussion, the committee concluded that chapters are free to interpret the requirements of Associate Membership in such a way that undergraduate students can be (and are, in many chapters) inducted into Sigma Xi. Citing a bylaws requirement that membership in the society not be linked with the attainment of a particular degree, the CQM Chair responded to Dr. Wade in a memo describing the discussion and conclusions.
2. Bridge Dues: For the second consecutive year, the CQM considered the pros and cons of recommending bridge dues for Sigma Xi members during the first two or three years after their terminal degree. The committee endorses the idea of offering a dues amount equal to half the difference between student and full dues. The goal of this approach is to increase the number of new and existing members in the years following graduation, traditionally a time of likely attrition for new initiates. Contingent on other discussions regarding the Young and International Scientists' fund, the CQM will prepare a proposal to the finance committee for consideration at its 2005 meeting.

#### **D. Chapter Annual Reports**

The new Sigma Xi database offers powerful tools for staff to support chapter officers and to monitor the health of chapters. In the coming year, the Chapter Annual Report form will be redesigned to make better use of the new software, to be easier for chapter officers to complete, and to be more useful to staff and officers. The committee made several recommendations to shorten the time it takes to complete the form, to collect more useful information, and to accurately reflect the impact of Sigma Xi chapters.

#### **E. Notifying Chapters of Members Who Move into their Areas**

As part of the new database design, staff have been instructed to develop a mechanism for notifying chapters when members move from another geographic area into their area. The CQM discussed the merits of this goal and made recommendations to staff about useful and efficient ways to design such a mechanism. Staff continue to work on this 'zone project' and anticipate it to be functional in 12 to 18 months. The CQM recommended that chapters sign up for the service rather than being forced to use it. The committee also reiterated that the commitment to members' privacy must be honored as the process is designed.

#### F. **Degrees from Virtual Universities**

Over the last few years, an increasing number of nominations for membership have included credentials from 'virtual universities.' The committee discussed this issue and concluded that as long as institutions are accredited, these credentials should not be treated any differently than traditional universities.

#### G. **Leadership Liaisons**

The members of the CQM spent several hours in 'training' with staff to prepare these volunteers for making visits to chapters while traveling on other business. The training was identical to training that was offered to Regional and Constituency Directors earlier in the year. The goal of the Leadership Liaison program is to maximize the number of chapters that get personal attention from Sigma Xi staff and leaders. The goal of the training is to provide background on typical chapter issues and advice on making the most of a short visit.

### III. **Awards for FY2003 (July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003)**

#### A. **Certificates of Excellence**

Certificates of Excellence were awarded to the following chapters for overall outstanding activity during FY2001. Nominees were chosen by the Constituency Group Directors based on Chapter Annual Reports, and winners were selected by the Committee on Qualifications and Membership as Chapters of Excellence.

The **Fairfield University Chapter** Seminar Series has helped science students to recognize and appreciate the importance of diversifying their science exposure through attendance at the lectures. The lectures are becoming a part of the culture at Fairfield University. The chapter also held one seminar this year for the chapter's three past GIAR recipients.

The **McGill-Montreal Chapter** took a field trip to the Canadian Space Agency. The trip covered the Canadian innovation: Canadarm2 and other robotic innovations important for space exploration.

A panel discussion by new and established faculty in the **Middle Tennessee State University Chapter** described their experiences as women in various scientific disciplines. This event was part of National Women's History Month. The chapter also sponsored two lectures dealing with the financial pressures at research institutions.

The **Saint Joseph's University Chapter** organized a panel discussion on stem cell that attracted more than 100 people.

Among the outstanding events the **University of Denver Chapters** sponsored was a talk by Sigma Xi's Young Investigator winner Sherry Yennello.

The **University of Georgia Chapter** sponsored a panel discussion and information session concerning the Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research program. Three former grant winners gave PowerPoint presentations about their research and described the grant application process. The chapter provided a free lunch to attendees, with pizza donated by a local restaurant.

The **University of Texas Medical Branch Chapter** provided poster boards and judges for undergraduate and graduate student research symposia on campus. The chapter also provided support for Sigma Xi's Student Research Conference.

The **Vassar College Chapter** organized the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair in April which had 300 participants from 33 local schools.

#### B. **Chapter Program Awards**

Chapter Program Awards were given to the following chapters for organizing and/or hosting a single, outstanding program during the last year. Nominees were chosen by the Regional Directors based on Chapter Annual Reports and winners were selected by the Committee on Qualifications and Membership.

The Kirksville Chapter has developed a speaker's bureau for local schools involving 26 members and is also working on outreach projects in cooperation with civic groups and the local newspaper.

A series of talks sponsored by the **McGill-Montreal Chapter** linked the brain, the body and the physics behind movement.

The **Saint Joseph's University Chapter** sponsored for the 14th year the annual student research symposium with 135 posters presented by students.

As part of the science and engineering fair the **South Dakota State University Chapter** sponsored, the chapter developed Web-based resources to help the children with their science fair activities.

Members of the **South Florida Water Management District Chapter** mentored summer interns in environmental sciences and gave informal presentations about resource management at local high schools. They also provided environmental updates for local clubs, citizen action groups and the news media, and interacted with local, state and national elected officials on resource management issues.

The **University of Georgia Chapter** extended its Encouragement-in-Science Essay competition to all Athens area elementary schools. More than 80 entries made it through an initial screening at participating schools.

Three weekly Science in Your Life lectures were held by the **Vassar College Chapter** for the purpose of bringing together prominent scientists and the lay public in the exploration of topics of general interest and concern.

**C. Certificates of Recognition**

Certificates of Recognition were awarded in to the following 15 chapters, which initiated the most new members last year.

Brown University  
Carleton College  
Claremont Colleges  
Delta  
Fordham University  
Georgetown University  
Hamilton College  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Mount Holyoke College  
Smith College  
North Carolina State University  
Swarthmore College  
Southern Maine  
Saint Joseph's University  
Union College

**IV. Approved New Chapters, Mergers and Name Changes**

**A. New International Partner**

On May 21, 2004, **Sigma Xi Moscow** was installed as an International Partner.

**B. Name Changes**

The following name changes were approved by the Committee:

On July 22, 2003, chapter 658 changed names from Western Maryland College to McDaniel College.

On January 6, 2004, chapter 605, changed names from University of Southern Colorado to Colorado State University-Pueblo.

On January 23, 2004, chapter 256 changed names from University of South Florida to Tampa Bay.

On April 22, 2004, chapter 140 changed names from Chicago Medical School to Rosalind Franklin University.

On May 11, 2004, chapter 176 changed names from SUNY at Albany to Albany, New York.

**V. Membership of the Committee**

For the year ending June 30, 2004, the Committee on Qualifications and Membership consisted of the following members:

Graham Peaslee (Chair), Hope College  
Sulekha Anand, San Jose State University  
Kathleen Browne, Rider University  
Anthony Iacopino, Marquette University  
Jan Kolakowski, US Army Aberdeen Proving Ground (Chesapeake Area Chapter)  
Ruth Miller, Kansas State University  
Patricia Pierce Ramsey, Shaw University  
John Rimoldi, University of Mississippi  
Pamela Willoughby, University of Alberta

Staff Liaisons:

Pam Blondin, Director of Membership and Chapter Programs  
Lisa Rhoades, Chapter Programs Manager

**VI. Acknowledgments**

In addition to the two staff liaisons, the committee wishes to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication to membership, chapters and programs. Particular thanks go to the members of the department of membership and chapter programs.