

CSWP The Committee on the Status of Women in Physics

OCTOBER 2003

In the year 2003, the CSWP membership consisted of Dongqi Li of Argonne National Laboratory (Chair), Bruce West of U.S. Army Research Office, Cynthia Keppel of Hampton University, Miriam Forman of SUNY- Stony Brook, Frances Hellman of University of California at San Diego (co-Vice Chair), Margaret Murnane of JILA/University of Colorado (co-Vice Chair), Aihua Xie of Oklahoma State University, Patricia Mooney of IBM T. J. Watson Research Center, and Lene Hau of Harvard University.

2003 Meetings were held in March at the APS Headquarters in College Park, Maryland and in October in Chicago. Update on items brought to the APS Executive Board and Council:

1. Current statistics of women in APS

Women now comprise 10% of the total APS membership. Only 4.5% of APS Fellows are women. 13.8% of male members are fellows compared to only 5.8% of female members. A study is underway to break up these numbers according to age or the years in APS. It is phenomenal that, in 2003, 7 out of 51 APS awards/prizes, including 3 out of 7 dissertation awards/prizes, went to women. In 2002, out of a total of 52 awards/prizes, only the one specifically for women, the Maria Goeppert Mayer Award, went to a woman. At the 2003 March and April Meetings, women represented 8.2 and 17.8%, respectively, of all invited speakers. These numbers include the invited sessions with all women speakers that CSWP co-sponsored. As a reference, 18% of undergraduate majors, 13% of Ph.D.s, and 2.5% of full professors were women, according to the recent AIP statistics.

2. Efforts to boost women's visibility in APS

A letter is sent to the Chairs of the Award/Prize committees in the units to remind them considering the deserving women physicists. Similar letters are drafted for the Unit Chairs, Physics Department Chairs, women fellows, etc., to encourage nominations of women for Awards/Prizes, fellowships, and invited talks. These letters will become a permanent collection in the committee. The committee members also vowed to generate nominations for other women at the grassroots level.

3. 2003 March/April Meeting activities

At the 2003 March Meeting, CSWP hosted a special panel discussion on "Women in Physics: Title IX and the Need to Change". It grasped at the opportunity of the first-ever Senate hearing on Title IX and women in science last October. Title IX of the Educational Amendments prohibits sex discrimination by any educational institution receiving federal funds, which has made dramatic, yet controversial impacts to women's sports. Will it do the same in the classrooms and labs? The panel consisted of Catherine Didion, the Executive Officer of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS); Judy Franz, Secretary General of International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) and Executive Officer of American Physical

Society (APS); Debra Rolison of Naval Research Laboratory, and was chaired by Susan Coppersmith of University of Wisconsin. The presentations were followed by extensive, sometimes heated discussions. The event attracted 100 participants, 20-30 of them men. The panel discussion was followed by the CSWP reception.

CSWP also co-sponsored an invited technical symposium with GMAG titled "Magnetism and Dimensionality: Bulk, Films, and Nanostructures", which featured 5 outstanding women physicists in magnetism. The idea is to not only offering scientific exchange at its best, but also to make a visual impact: women can indeed do physics. And it provides role models for aspiring women students. The session was very well attended with 120, or 2% of the conference attendees (100, or 2% of men and 20, or 4% of women). The feedback was very positive.

Another activity at the March Meeting is the Networking Breakfast co-sponsored with FIAP. The speaker was Padmasree Warrior, Senior VP/Chief Technology Officer for Motorola, who focused on various aspects of leadership.

At the April Meeting CSWP sponsored a networking breakfast, co-sponsored a reception with FIP/COM, and an invited session with DPP. The speaker at the breakfast was Sherry Yennello of Texas A&M University.

Planning for 2004 is well underway. At both the March and April Meetings, we will co-host a session on "Keeping Girls/Women in Science", which focus on education and retention issues specifically for women from high school to postdoc and beyond. A session on historical contributions of women to surface science will be co-sponsored with FHP at the March Meeting. Receptions and networking breakfasts will occur as usual. The popular workshop on "Survival Skills for Successful Women Physicists" will be offered again in conjunction with the March 2004 Meeting. The half-day informational workshop will cover such issues as establishing scientific identity, balancing career and family, negotiation, leadership, etc.

4. Increased site visits

Our established site visit program, where a team of well-respected women physicists is invited by each interested institution to provide suggestions to improve the climate for women, is increasingly popular. Normally, we plan for 2 visits each year. After 4 visits last year to Argonne National Laboratory, Univ. of Wisconsin, Univ. of Iowa, and NASA/Goddard, 4 more have been conducted this year at Purdue Univ., Univ. of Minnesota, Duke University, and Ohio State University. Currently we are modifying the questionnaires as well as the letter to the Department Chairs of future visits to improve the effectiveness. We also plan to send letters to the Chairs of previously visited institutions to collect information on possible improvements and remind them of the site visit report 3 years after each visit. We are also drafting a list of "best practices" based on the accumulated knowledge from this program, which will be published and posted on the web.

5. Other activities

Since its publication last year, the booklet "Physics in Your Future" has been requested by a variety of institutions and individuals, from universities around the country to Girl Scouts of America. The number of requests, along with those for the "Celebrate Women in Physics" poster, is reaching 1100. The booklet and the poster convey the exciting possibilities of a career in physics to middle and high school girls and are available free of charge.

We are fostering further cooperation with other APS units and the other organizations interested in women in science. We invited Anne Catlla, Chair Elect of Forum on Grad Student Affairs, and Wendy Kneissel of Institute of Physics to the October meeting. They are co-sponsoring the education sessions at the March/April Meetings.

Other activities include APS/IBM research internship for undergraduate women, women speakers' list and the corresponding travel grants (4 grants/month), CSWP newsletter Gazette, the listservers WIPHYS and Friends of CSWP.