

Outcomes Report of the 2015 Conference of the National Society of Black Physicists

The 2015 Conference of the National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) was held at the Hilton Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, MD on February 25-28, 2015. The 2015 conference was the latest in a series of NSBP conferences which serve as the premier gatherings of minority physicists and the largest recruiting fairs for African American physics students and early career professionals.

The primary sponsor for the conference was the National Science Foundation. NSF provided an award (Award DMR-1419211) to Associated Universities, Inc., which served as the fiscal and managing organization for the NSBP2015 conference. Strategic Partnerships International was the event contractor.

The conference was further supported by 16 sponsors, and had representation from 103 institutions (universities, national laboratories, professional organizations and companies), including 22 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and 4 high schools. With 520 participants, the conference had a total of 70 sessions with 37 scientific sessions and 33 professional sessions throughout the event. The NSBP2015 had the largest participation of graduate students and faculty ever, and the average attendance was around 20/session. Representatives from the National Society of Hispanic Physicists led or co-organized the physics education and nuclear physics sessions, as well as an outreach event. Scientific sessions were scheduled during the morning and afternoon on Thursday and Friday, and on Saturday morning.

Thirteen physics sections were represented: Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASTRO), Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics (AMO), Chemical and Biological Physics (CBP), Condensed Matter and Materials Physics (CMMP), Cosmology, Gravitation and relativity (CGR), Earth and Planetary Sciences (EPSS), Fluid and Plasma Physics (FPP), Health Physics (HEA), Mathematics and Computational Physics (MCP), Medical Physics (MED), Nuclear and Particle Physics (NPP), Photonics and Optics (POP), and Physics Education Research (PER). Two NSBP Committees, International Affairs Committee (INT) and the newly formed Industry Physics Committee (IPC) organized special sessions.

Fourteen students were recognized with awards for their outstanding poster and/or oral presentations. The awards were sponsored by seven institutions: Harvard University Department of Physics and Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences for the poster of the year award, the International Society for Optics and Photonics, the Nuclear Science and Security Consortium DoE/NSA from the University of California at Berkeley, the American Institute of Physics, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the American Astronomical Society, and the American Physical Society.

Highlights of the lunch and dinner sessions were two plenary talks by prominent physicists and two panel discussions. The keynote speakers at Thursday's plenary luncheon and dinner, respectively, were Dr. William D. Phillips (National Institute of Standards and Technology and 1997 Nobel Laureate in Physics), and Dr. Ronald Mallet (University of Connecticut).

A panel discussion on the scientific mission of multiple Federal Agencies was moderated by Dr. Deborah Jackson (National Science Foundation), and included representatives from the National

Science Foundation (Dr. Marilyn Galvin, Dr. James, Ulvestad, and Dr. Kathleen McCloud), the Department of Energy (Christopher Ford), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (Dr. Willie May), and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (Dr. Meredith Drosback). Dr. Aziza Baccouche of Aziza Productions moderated a luncheon panel on Physicists in the Media that included Dr. Dione Rossiter (American Association for the Advancement of Science) and Dr. DeVan Hankerson (Minority Media and Telecommunications Council).

The NSBP Pre-College Program Committee conducted a K-12 outreach event on February 26, 2015 at the National Academy Foundation/Academy of Engineering, Friendship Tech Prep Academy in Washington, DC. Committee members performed science demonstrations for high-school students.

Conference evaluation data were collected through the registration process and by two surveys, one conducted during the conference and another conducted post conference. A University of Maryland College Park Education team studying the experiences of underrepresented students in physics conducted a series of student interviews during the conference as a continuation of a study that started in 2005. The post-conference survey was emailed to all the participants. This survey included 18 questions: there were 193 responses with the majority of the participants being students (70%), compared to 34% who classified themselves as faculty or professionals. The conference attendees were primarily first time participants (70%). The survey revealed that the main reason for student attendance at the conference was to identify or to meet a mentor. The top sessions of interest, measured as a percentage of conference attendees, were astronomy, women in physics, cosmology, and physics education.

