

2006 Report from the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy

by Patricia Knezek

The 2005-2006 year was an active one for the committee. It underwent a normal membership rotation, with CSWA committee members Lisa Frattare (STScI) and Neal Evans (U. Texas) completing their tenure in June of 2005. They were both instrumental in the successful authoring and endorsement of the Pasadena Recommendations. Also, Lisa has served as a co-editor of both *STATUS* and *AASWOMEN* during her tenure on CSWA. We thank them both! I was honored to be appointed to an additional term on the CSWA, and continued to chair the committee for the 2005-2006 year. The other new committee members are Kim Venn (U. Victoria) and James Rhoads (Arizona State U.).

For this past year a significant focus of the committee has been working on ways to implement the recommendations based on the outcome of the conference "Women in Astronomy II: Ten Years After" (WIA II), held in Pasadena in June 2003. The set of recommendations is entitled "Equity Now: The Pasadena Recommendations for Gender Equality in Astronomy." As a reminder, this set of Recommendations focuses on five individual areas: A. Tenure-Track Hiring, B. Career Advancement and Recognition, C. Institutional Policies, D. Varied Career Paths, E. Cultural Issues, and F. Statistical Information. The Recommendations can be downloaded from the CSWA website in either pdf or word format, see: <http://www.aas.org/~cswa>.

One of the ways that the CSWA supported implementing the Recommendations was by hosting, with the Employment Committee, a special session at the June 2005 AAS meeting in Minneapolis. The session was entitled "Institutional Solutions to the 'Two-Body' Problem," and focused on the approaches that institutions are taking to help dual-career couples. Speakers included Dr. Eileen Friel (NSF), Dr. Tammy Smecker-Hane (U.C. Irvine), Dr. Roberta Humphreys (U. Minnesota), and Dr. Ellen Zweibel (U. Wisconsin – Madison). We followed this session by holding a panel discussion featuring astronomers who are members of dual-career couples at the CSWA session. They represented a range of seniorities and discussed their experiences. This was followed by an open floor discussion. The majority of the presentations are available off of the CSWA website, see: <http://www.aas.org/~cswa>.

Other ways that the CSWA has been working towards implementation of the Pasadena Recommendations include (1) drafting a letter to send to the heads of departments and/or institutions that employ professional astronomers to encourage them to endorse the Pasadena

Recommendations. It is anticipated that this will be ready for review by the AAS Executive Officers before the June 2006 AAS meeting; (2) forming a group that includes statisticians, graduate students in sociology and women's studies, and astronomers to define and then undertake a longitudinal survey to study how women progress through their careers in astronomy. This group includes Dr. Rachel Ivie of the AIP, who has led the AIP Surveys on the status of women and minorities in physics and astronomy; and (3) identifying specific recommendations where the CSWA could play an active role, and forming subcommittees to work on them.

During the January 2006 AAS meeting, the CSWA held a very successful session. During the first part of the session, Dr. Laura Kay (Barnard) and Dr. Rachel Ivie (AIP) reported on the Second International Conference on Women in Physics that was held May 23-26, 2005 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Dr. Ivie then provided a very informative presentation on the results of the AIP survey she led of the situation for women in astronomy, published earlier this year. She noted that the results have often been misrepresented in the press as concluding "There is no leaky pipeline in astronomy." Dr. Ivie's presentation has been posted on the CSWA website, along with the follow-up questions and answers for both Dr. Kay and Dr. Ivie.

The CSWA also collaborated with our Canadian colleagues Jayanne English (U. Manitoba), Stephanie Cote (HIA), Brenda Matthews (HIA), and Michael Reid (CfA/SMA) on proposal for an approved special session that will be held at the June 2006 AAS meeting in Calgary. The session is entitled "Canadian Women Astronomers: Their Status and Science." The session will first focus on the status of women astronomers in Canada, including a brief history, current statistics (including the results of the second Canadian survey), some history of women astronomers in Canada. Featured speakers will be Dr. Michael Reid (CfA/SMA), Dr. Christine Clement (U. Toronto), and Dr. Elizabeth Griffin (HIA). The second section will include short science talks by three prominent female Canadian astronomers: Dr. Kim Venn (U. Victoria), Dr. Samar Safi-Harb (U. Manitoba), and Dr. Jo-Anne Brown (U. Calgary). Details of this special session will be covered in the next annual report.

The committee has also established a communication link with the recently formed IAU Working Group on the Status of Women in Astronomy. The CSWA was asked by the Working Group to communicate ideas about outstanding issues and possible solutions for women in astronomy. Dr. Andrea Dupree, a member of the IAU Working Group, attended the CSWA's Executive Session in January for a very productive discussion. The Working Group has issued an invitation to the CSWA chair to speak at its session during the IAU General Symposium in Prague in August 2006. The committee plans to continue to build this connection.

In addition to the committee's work on the Pasadena Recommendations and collaborating with other committees on special sessions, we have also continued the basic activities of the CSWA. Amy Simon-Miller not only does an exemplary job of maintaining our website, <http://www.aas.org/~cswa>, she has also drafted a completely revamped website that will be released soon. Like the current website, the revamped website will contain information about our ongoing activities, including meetings, surveys, and back issues of our publications. It will also provide a link to the Women in Astronomy Database produced by the CSWA, which can be used to find speakers for colloquia, scientific meetings, or school visits, to solicit job applicants, or to sort by education, expertise, research interests, etc. for statistical or search purposes. We also provide links to other websites targeted at women in science. But in particular, as a part of our ongoing efforts to help institutions implement the Pasadena Recommendations, the redesign of our website will incorporate helpful information and links on recommendations.

Our committee continues to publish *STATUS* (the twice-yearly paper magazine). Fran Bagenal of the University of Colorado is the *STATUS* editor. I serve as an associate editor, and Joannah Hinz continues in her role as an associate editor as well. Krista Wildt at STScI continues to excel at the task of designing the layout. Recent issues have included an interview with Dr. Margaret Kivelson at UCLA, an article on Dorrit Hoffleit, as well as number of articles focusing on family issues.

We have also continued *AASWOMEN* (the weekly electronic newsletter). Through June 2005, it was edited by Lisa Frattare, Jim Ulvestad, and myself. In June 2005, Lisa rotated off the CSWA, and Joan Schmelz joined our editorial team. Like *STATUS*, the *AASWOMEN* newsletter focuses on information on the situation of women in science and engineering, with particular emphasis on astronomy, and back issues are available linked from the CSWA website. This year *AASWOMEN* has also highlighted perceived conflicts between family and career that some women (and men) face. We have also discussed career options outside the traditional academic position at a major research institution. Other items have included: grants and awards of interest, such as those for women re-entering the fields of physics and astronomy after leaving for an extended period of time; the potential applications of Title IX to science and engineering; and mentoring opportunities for women students. We also publish job ads that are submitted to the editorial staff.