

Annual Report on the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy for 2012-2013

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The members of the 2012-13 Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA) are: Joan Schmelz (Chair, Univ. of Memphis), Caroline Simpson (Florida International Univ.), Michele Montgomery (Univ. Central Florida), Laura Trouille (Northwestern/Adler Planetarium), Nancy Morrison (Univ. of Toledo), Ed Bertschinger (MIT), David Charbonneau (CfA), Neil Gehrels (NASA-GSFC), Meredith Hughes (Wesleyan Univ.), Jessica Kirkpatrick (Univ. of Calif. Berkeley), Nick Murphy (CfA), and Nicolle Zellner (Albion Coll.).

Hannah Jang-Condell (Univ. of Wyoming), Ann Hornschemeier (NASA GSFC), Donald Kniffen (USRA), and Marc Postman (STScI), rotated off the committee. Neil Gehrels, Meredith Hughes, Jessica Kirkpatrick, Nick Murphy, and Nicolle Zellner joined the committee.

Activities at the 220th AAS Meeting in Anchorage, AK

CSWA chair, Joan Schmelz, hosted a Town Hall meeting on Workplace Bullying in astronomy. Unprofessional behavior is not limited to gender discrimination and sexual harassment. There are cases when “something is just not right” in the workplace, which may involve no sexual overtones whatsoever. One such example is workplace bullying, which can have some characteristics in common with childhood bullying. It is not limited to women. It can involve teasing or taunting. It can be overt or covert. It can be physically or psychologically threatening. It can come from a supervisor or a collaborator. It can involve spreading rumors about your qualifications or abilities as a scientist. The stress associated with a bullying situation can affect your work and your health. You may even feel that your future career is in jeopardy. The CSWA Town Hall at the Anchorage AAS meeting introduced the concept of Workplace Bullying. It also included group discussion as well as questions from the audience. The ppt presentation from the session is available on the CSWA web site:

<http://www.aas.org/cswa/MEETINGS.html>

Activities at the 221th AAS Meeting in Long Beach, CA

CSWA members David Charbonneau and Laura Trouille organized a Special Session on Family Leave Policies and Childcare for Graduate Students and Postdocs. This session provided a forum in which individuals in positions to influence policy (including university faculty and department chairs as well as program directors from funding agencies) and those who may directly benefit from such policies (graduate students and postdocs) could discuss the current practices regarding parental leave and childcare for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, and the means by which departments and funding agencies could establish more supportive policies. The session began with the results from the recent national survey of graduate student parental leave policies in US departments of astronomy and astrophysics. It was followed by a talk from a department

chair and a graduate student who together implemented a departmental paid leave policy. Additional speakers included program directors from NSF and NASA, AAS President David Helfand, and Dr. Trouille on results from the survey of postdoc policies. Roughly 65 members of the AAS attended the session, including representatives from NASA and NSF as well as senior faculty representatives from some departments of astronomy. Slides from the talks are available on the CSWA website:

<http://www.aas.org/cswa/MEETINGS.html>

Communication with the Community

The personnel for *STATUS*, CSWA's semi-annual magazine, were as last year: Katy Garmany (NOAO) as editor; Joan Schmelz (Univ. of Memphis) as acquisitions editor; Pat Knezek (now at the NSF), Joannah Hinz (Univ. of Arizona), and Nancy Morrison (Univ. of Toledo) as associate editors; and Meg Urry (Yale Univ.) as contributing editor. All-electronic publication as a PDF document continued, but a tentative decision was made to post individual articles as stand-alone web pages, beginning with the 2013 June issue. The 2013 January issue included: an article by Megan Reiter on work, life, and family-friendly policies; a reprint of chapter 16 from *Delusions of Gender* by Cordelia Fine; an article on women versus women by Joan Schmelz (reprinted from her posts on the Women in Astronomy blog); advice by Karly Pitman on the practical aspects of working remotely from one's place of employment; and a review by Gerrit L. Verschuur of two books on the role of women in World War II. Articles planned for the 2013 June issue include: a report by Nancy Morrison on a AAAS meeting session on the history of women in science; a description by Annika Peter on her experiences with the two-body problem; an article by Jedidah Isler on diversity issues; an article by Meg Urry on graduate education in physics; and a book review by Joannah Hinz. Archive:

<http://www.aas.org/cswa/STATUS.html>

The CSWA publishes a weekly email newsletter called *AASWOMEN*. This year, a fourth co-editor was added, and the position of Senior Editor was created. The editors are Caroline Simpson (Senior Editor), Michele Montgomery, Nick Murphy, and Daryl Haggard. For the first time, we have an editor who is not a member of the CSWA; this has worked well but care must be taken to remember to include the non-committee member, as needed, in emails to the committee. Management of the subscriber list was moved to Google Groups with little impact; we currently have 1033 active subscribers. A typical newsletter issue contains requests for information or advice, links to news items about women in science, announcements of honors and awards given to women in science, information about programs and meetings, and links to internship and job postings. We also include links to the weekly postings on the Women in Astronomy blog, and the newsletter is also posted there and on the CSWA Facebook page. Some of the topics covered over the past year include: advice on responding to bullying, sexual harassment, and unprofessional behavior; information and statistics on why women aren't promoted to full professor as often as men are; parental leave for graduate students; unconscious bias; and a series of ongoing contributions about 'how things have changed - for the better!' which highlighted practices we are thankful to see have vanished (women are no longer automatically expected to serve the tea and cookies at colloquia, for example). Due to the

growing list of job openings that we were requested to include in the newsletter, we developed a new policy during the past year: we now list a one-line description and the link to the full job posting. The Women in Physics newsletter, WIPHYS, followed our lead and adopted this policy soon afterwards. In order to help educate those interested in increasing diversity in their hiring practices, we also include the following text and link with the job postings: "For those interested in increasing excellence and diversity in their organizations, a list of resources and advice is here: <http://www.aas.org/cswa/diversity.html#howtoincrease> ." Archive:

<http://www.aas.org/cswa/AASWOMEN.html>

The Women in Astronomy Blog has continued to increase its readership and the range and frequency of posts since its inception in May 2008. We now publish a new blog post at least three times a week, with an average daily rate of 360 views and high impact posts reaching over 10,000 views. Our rotation of bloggers includes current members of the CSWA (Ed Bertschinger, Dave Charbonneau, Neil Gehrels, Jessica Kirkpatrick, Joan Schmelz, Laura Trouille, and Nicolle Zellner) and over a dozen external contributors. Because this large group spans career stages from graduate student to full professor and includes astronomers who have moved to careers outside academia, the blog effectively addresses concerns and provides relevant resources and advice across career stages. Topics discussed this past year included mentoring advice, role models, evolution in workplace culture/climate, work-life balance, family leave policies, job/career advice, unconscious bias, impostor syndrome, stereotype threat, bullying, sexual harassment policies, and more. The Blog is linked to share entries on Facebook and Twitter. Blog:

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com>

Activity on the AAS CSWA Twitter account (@AAS_Women) increased during the year. With the assistance of Hannah Jang-Condell, automatic tweets of posts on the Women in Astronomy blog were set up. Posts on the blog having concurrently become more frequent, the Twitter account is now generating more original tweets than retweets. Probably as a result, followers have accrued at an increased rate. By mid-April, the account was following 122 other accounts, mostly science organizations, bloggers, and news outlets, as well as a few noteworthy individual astronomers. It had 274 followers, to be compared with 85 followers in its first year a year earlier.

During the report year, our Facebook page received a new masthead picture, a mosaic of pictures of the individual committee members. Most weekly reports on activity at the page indicate increases in the "Talking About This" and "Weekly Total Reach" statistics. Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Committee-on-the-Status-of-Women-in-Astronomy/43977374494>

CSWA also contributes articles to the AAS Newsletter, including one in the January-February 2013 issue entitled "Improving the Status of Women in Physics (and Astronomy) Departments,"

<http://aas.org/posts/news/2013/01/improving-status-women-physics-and-astronomy-departments>

The resource pages on the CSWA web site continue to grow, but no new pages have been added in the past year.

CSWA 2013 Demographics Survey

This year the CSWA is undertaking a survey of the demographics of PhD-producing astronomy/astrophysics departments and research institutes around the US. It is complementary to similar surveys conducted by NSF and AIP, but with a different list of institutions (not limited to the AIP's list of PhD-granting astronomy institutions, which omits several major producers of astronomy PhDs and research scientists) and with careful separation of astronomy from physics personnel. We are asking departments for a simple tally of the genders of their employees at each professional stage: graduate student, postdoc, assistant professor (or research equivalent), associate professor (or research equivalent), full professor (or research equivalent). We will compare these surveys with the results of identical surveys conducted by CSWA in 1992, 1997, and 2003. This year we have also added new questions about the number and gender of adjunct faculty (who hold a PhD and are paid at least in part for teaching but are not on the tenure track) and full professors with administrative appointments. We also increased the number of institutions represented on the list, particularly in the category of research institutes and national observatories. At present, we are completing the data collection phase. So far, 41 of 48 institutions have provided data for the survey, and we are hopeful that we will be able to achieve a 100% participation rate. Our planned timeline is to analyze the data and write up a summary for the STATUS newsletter during summer-fall 2013, and to organize a special session to report on the results at the winter AAS meeting in 2014 or 2015.

CSWA Recommendations to the NSF Career-Life Initiative

The NSF recently launched its 'Career-Life Initiative'. This is a long-term plan to develop a set of forward-looking policies and practices to balance career and family life demands in the U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) enterprise. Establishing such a culture is crucial to recruiting and retaining a high-quality STEM workforce at our nation's academic institutions. In response to NSF's request for input from the community, the CSWA, with Laura Trouille as lead author, provided a document highlighting a set of key issues and practical policy recommendations addressing them. These included establishing paid family leave policies for graduate students and postdocs, use of grant funds for childcare, provisions in NSF grants for 4-5 year postdoc positions, double-blind review of NSF proposals, elimination of age-bias in fellowships, grants, and awards, and publication of gender submission and recipient percentages for NSF grants. We also provided a version of the document for the NSF AST portfolio review. The full document is posted at

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2012/01/cswa-response-to-nsf-career-life.html>

Women of Color in Astronomy and Astrophysics

In the spring of 2012, the AAS was invited to prepare written testimony in support of a conference entitled, "Seeking Solutions: Maximizing American Talent by Advancing Women of

Color in Academia," which was sponsored by the National Academies and took place in early June 2012 (<http://sites.nas.edu/wocconference/>). The AAS responded by forming a subcommittee consisting of members of the CSWA and of the Committee on the Status of Minorities (CSMA). The subcommittee members and eventual authors of the testimony were: Dara Norman, Jedidah Isler, Hakeem Oluseyi (CSMA), Nancy Morrison, Caroline Simpson, and Laura Trouille (CSWA). The document "enumerates barriers that face women of color in astronomy, starting with those that particularly affect career establishment (early graduate student to postdoctoral) and moving to those that impact later career stages. [Then it] describes steps toward solutions to these problems, measures taken by the AAS, and lessons learned from academic programs." The full testimony, along with those prepared by many other scientific societies, is here:

<http://sites.nas.edu/wocconference/get-involved/organizations/>

CSWA Climate Site Visits for Astronomy Departments

A proposal was submitted to the AAS Council to implement Climate Site Visits for astronomy departments, which would be modeled on those done by the Committee on the Status of Women in Physics (CSWP) for physics departments. The goals of the CSWA's visits will be to: increase the committee's knowledge about problems experienced nationally by women students, postdocs, and faculty in astronomy; work with departments to identify problems; suggest means by which the department might solve those problems; and improve the climate for women generally. These goals are fully consistent with the AAS Mission Statement, especially: '(4) The Society, through its members, trains, mentors and supports the next generation of astronomers. The Society supports and promotes increased participation of historically underrepresented groups in astronomy.' Among the problems that have come to the attention of the CSWA in US institutions are: (1) inadequate mentoring of members of underrepresented groups; (2) occasional instances of sexual harassment; (3) the continued pervasiveness of unconscious bias and other issues affecting the climate for women; and (4) too-slow advancement of women, especially women of color, through the ranks of the profession. Indeed, the proposed CSWA Climate Site Visits for astronomy departments will suggest ways for departments to: Enable senior faculty in those departments to provide better mentoring for students, postdocs, and junior faculty; enable the visiting team to assist with mentoring the students, postdocs, and junior faculty in those departments; improve the teaching of diverse audiences in those departments; promote the knowledge and practice of professional ethics to the next generation of astronomers and to their mentors; provide advice on how to recruit and retain a more diverse group of students and faculty.