

2007 Report from the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy

by Patricia Knezek

The 2006-2007 year was another active one for the committee. It underwent a normal membership rotation, with CSWA committee members Jim Ulvestad (NRAO), Stefanie Wachter (IPAC), and Kim Weaver (GSFC) completing their tenure in June of 2006. They were all instrumental in the successful authoring and endorsement of the Pasadena Recommendations. Also, Jim served as a co-editor of *AASWOMEN* during his tenure on CSWA. We thank them all! I was honored to be reappointed to chair the committee for the 2006-2007 year. The new committee members are Geoffrey Clayton (LSU/Baton Rouge, LA), John Feldmeier (Youngstown State/Youngstown, OH), and Hannah Jang-Condell (DTM/Washington, DC).

As a committee, we continued our focus 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 has been working towards implementation of the Pasadena Recommendations was by 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. This letter has been reviewed by AAS President Craig Wheeler, who had a couple of minor changes. It is anticipated that those changes will be made, and the letter ready for distribution by the May 2007 AAS meeting.

Another way the CSWA has been working on the Recommendations was by forming a group that to define and then undertake a longitudinal study 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, Dr. Patricia Knezek, CSWA member and current chair, Dr. Susana Deustua (AAS), Dr. Stefanie Wachter of IPAC, and Audra Baleisis, a women's studies graduate student at the University of Arizona. This group has successfully designed the first survey for distribution to astronomy and astrophysics

graduate students, and secured funding from the AAS and in-kind contributions from the AIP for the deployment and completion of this first survey.

Additionally, the CSWA, with help from Lisa Frattare and Krista Wildt at STScl, has drafted a brochure on the Pasadena Recommendations to distribute. This brochure is currently under final review by the committee. We plan to distribute the first copies at the May 2007 AAS meeting in Honolulu.

During the June 2006 AAS in Calgary, the CSWA co-sponsored a highly successful special session with Stephanie Coté, (HIA) Jayanne English (U. Manitoba), Brenda Matthews (HIA), and Michael Reid (CfA/SMA). The session was entitled "Canadian Women Astronomers: Their Status and Science," and took advantage of the consecutive CASCA and AAS meetings to highlight the achievements of women astronomers in Canada. Dr. Jayanne English chaired the session. The first part of the session focused on the status of women astronomers in Canada, including some history, and current statistics based on the results of a second Canadian survey of Canadian institutions. Talks in this portion of the session included "Women in Canadian Astronomy, 1991-2005" by Dr. Michael Reid (CfA/SMA) and Dr. Brenda Matthews (HIA), "Canadian Women in Astronomy" by Dr. R. Elizabeth Griffin (HIA), and "Women in Astronomy at the University of Toronto" by Dr. Christine Clement (U. Toronto). There was also time for discussion about what differences and/or opportunities there are for women who are based in Canada, as opposed to the U.S. (such as the University Faculty Awards that NSERC has created to increase the participation of women in science). The second part of the session contained short science talks by several eminent female astronomers in Canada. The talks in this portion were given by Dr. Samar Safi-Harb (U. Manitoba), Dr. Gretchen Harris (U. Waterloo), and Dr. Jo-Anne Brown (U. Calgary). These talks provided a wonderful introduction to the diversity of research that Canadian women astronomers are undertaking.

During the January 2007 AAS meeting, the CSWA held a very successful splinter session. The first part of the session focused on the Pasadena Recommendation for a longitudinal study of women in astronomy. Dr. Meg Urry (Yale) began by reviewing the work that has been done before on the statistics of women and men in astronomy. Dr. Rachel Ivie (AIP) followed with a description of the planned longitudinal study, and the upcoming release of the first survey. The second part of the session focused on family leave policies. Dr. Hannah Jang-Condell (Carnegie/DTM) gave an informative presentation on the basic requirements from the Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA), along with some policy guidelines and how they are implemented. She also

presented some of the problems particular to astronomers on an academic track as well as her own recommendations for how to improve current practices. This has led to on-going discussions with people involved in the Hubble, Chandra, and Spitzer Fellowships to work with them to put successful leave policies in place.

Following on the success of the “Canadian Women Astronomers” special session, the CSWA also collaborated with the Solar Physics Division (SPD) through CSWA and SPD member Joan Schmelz on proposal for an approved special session that will be held at the May 2007 AAS meeting in Honolulu. The session is entitled “Solar Women Physicists: Their Status and Science.” The session will first focus on the history of women in solar physics in a talk give by Dr. Andrea Dupree (CfA). This will be followed by talks by three prominent solar physicists: Dr. Shadia Habbal (University of Hawaii), Dr. Janet Luhmann (UC Berkeley), and Dr. Sarbani Basu (Yale University). Details of this special session will be covered in the next annual report.

The majority of the presentations for all CSWA sponsored sessions are available off of the CSWA website once the session has been held, see: <http://www.aas.org/cswa/MEETINGS.html> .

The committee’s communication with the IAU Working Group on the Status of Women in Astronomy resulted in an invitation to the CSWA chair to speak at its session during the IAU General Symposium in Prague in August 2006 on the status of women in astronomy in North America. I also attended the Working Group’s business meeting and discussed organizational techniques, committee focus, etc. I also gave an invited talk on the status of women in astronomy at the conference held in honor of Dorrit Hoffleit’s 100th Year in April 2006. This talk will be in the proceedings, which should be out by June 2007.

In addition to the committee’s work on the Pasadena Recommendations and collaborating with other committees on special sessions, we have also continued the other activities of the CSWA. Amy Simon-Miller and John Feldmeier released a completely revamped version of the CSWA website, <http://www.aas.org/cswa> . This revamped website contains information about our ongoing activities, including meetings, surveys, and back issues of our publications. It provides 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 incorporates a separate link to the Pasadena

Recommendations themselves, and each major recommendation has a separate page that will incorporate helpful information and links on that recommendation. We are now working to provide information for those pages.

The CSWA and the CSMA issued a joint statement: "After the Senior Review: Considerations for Optimizing the Workforce" that appeared in the March 2007 AAS Newsletter. They also submitted a joint proposal to the NSF to fund the creation of a searchable database of women and minority astronomers. We have not yet heard about the outcome of that proposal.

The CSWA decided to run a contest for a logo for the committee. We received several submissions, and will post the options off of our web site to allow the broader AAS community to vote on which they prefer. We plan to use this logo in things like the Pasadena Recommendation brochure, etc.

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 article on legal tools to use to fix the leaky pipeline by Dr. Charlotte Fishman, "Breaking for Families" by Kendra Snyder, articles on Betty Friedan, as well as number of articles on the statistical studies of whether gender matters in the pursuit of a successful career in science.

We have also continued *AASWOMEN* (the weekly electronic newsletter). Through October 2006, it was edited by Joan Schmelz, Jim Ulvestad, and myself. In mid-December 2006, Geoff Clayton and Hannah Jang-Condell joined our editorial team. In March 2007, I rotated off of the editorship and left it in the capable hands of Joan, Geoff, and Hannah. 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, particularly with reference to childcare. We have had a strong series on harassment (both professional and personal) and how to deal with it. 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 inappropriate Edmund Optics catalog cover; and mentoring opportunities for women students. We also publish job ads that are submitted to the editorial staff.