

Annual Report on the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy for 2007-2008

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The 2007-2008 year was an active one for the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA). I took over as Chair of the CSWA from Pat Knezek who continued on the committee and was of great assistance to me. My appointment was something of a milestone since I am the first male chair of the CSWA. This was important symbolically because it demonstrates that even on the women's committee, there is no discrimination due to gender. But I think it is also important because a significant part of our target audience for women's issues, i.e. men, are often largely forgotten. It is very important for the CSWA to be talking to the whole AAS not just the fraction that is female.

The CSWA also underwent the normal membership rotation with Amy Simon-Miller (GSFC) and Francesca Primas (ESO) completing their time on the CSWA. Their efforts on behalf of the committee were much appreciated. The new committee members were Wal Sargent (Caltech), Caroline Simpson (FIU), and Joannah Hinz (Steward Obs.). In addition, Kim Venn (Univ. of Victoria) had to rotate off the committee early. Joan Schmelz (Univ. of Memphis) kindly agreed to stay on the committee for an extra year.

At the Summer 2007 Hawaii AAS meeting, the CSWA held a town hall focusing on Harassment in Professional Environments. The goals of the session were (1) to re-educate people about what can constitute harassment; (2) to briefly review what a victim should do if a grievance procedure exists; (3) to begin to develop a set of guidelines with the AAS and its divisions for a grievance procedure associated with incidents at official AAS/Division functions. In response to this, Kevin Marvel drafted an Anti-Harassment Policy for the AAS with the assistance of the CSWA.

The CSWA convened a panel at the January 2008 Austin AAS meeting in which astronomers at various stages in their careers described the ways in which they made their decisions about when to raise a family and how their choices have had an impact on their careers. The panel members were: Hannah Jang-Condell (University of Maryland & GSFC), Margaret Hanson (University of Cincinnati), Orsola De Marco (American Museum of Natural History), Charles Liu (CUNY), and John Debes (DTM). One of the most difficult decisions facing professional women is whether to have children and, if so, when. In practice women in astronomy have chosen a variety of solutions, ranging from delaying or interrupting graduate school or postdoctoral fellowships, delaying child rearing until after tenure, or even abandoning the idea of having children. These decisions usually have a considerable impact on the career path of a professional woman.

The committee drafted a letter for the AAS President which was sent in March 2008 to the heads of departments and/or institutions that employ professional astronomers to encourage them to endorse the Pasadena Recommendations. The CSWA has drafted a color brochure on the

Pasadena Recommendations to distribute. It is now available for download on the CSWA web site (www.aas.org/cswa). We also plan to distribute the brochure as an insert in STATUS.

Jim Ulvestad and Kevin Marvel asked the CSWA to take the lead on an opportunity to propose to the Elsevier Grant Program for funding for childcare at AAS meetings. James Rhoads took the lead in writing a proposal requesting \$20,000 per annum for three years. Although the proposal was not successful, Elsevier found it interesting and asked us to resubmit it this year. We plan to reapply.

The initial survey of the planned long-term (10+ years) longitudinal study (sponsored by the AAS, the American Institute of Physics (AIP), and the CSWA) of the career paths of women and men in astronomy has been sent out. This first survey has been distributed to graduate students registered in 2006-2007 in astronomy and astrophysics (including planetary science and solar physics). Our goal is to track the current cadre of students as they progress throughout their careers, learning not only what their varied career paths are, but also why they are pursued. The AIP is providing in-kind contributions by administering the survey and working with the Longitudinal Study Working Group to generate a report of the findings by early 2008. The AAS is providing the funding needed to collect the surveys and publish the report.

We are continuing to upgrade the CSWA's presence on the web. We plan more improvements in the coming year including, making the AASWOMEN newsletter available via RSS and the introduction of a CSWA Blog. You can find us at www.aas.org/cswa.