



CONNECTIONS

Linking EEO, Diversity and Science

Volume 1, Issue 5

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

May/June 2009

Latino Engineering and Science students visit NOAA Research



Don Mock, ESRL Deputy Director welcomes MAES students to NOAA Research. The students were from colleges in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and California.

College students from the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists, Inc (MAES) visited NOAA Research in Boulder, CO on April 3, 2009.

MAES was founded in Los Angeles, CA in 1974 by a group of professional engineers to advance and increase the number of Mexican Americans in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

As part of their leadership conference, students are exposed to local industry and this year they had the choice of visiting NOAA or Ball Aerospace. About 50 students participated in the NOAA tour led by Carol Knight, ESRL Outreach Specialist. The students listened to presentations by Don Mock, ESRL Deputy Director, who gave an overview of NOAA science and encouraged

students to consider NOAA as a place to work in the future.

Students then visited the Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), where Rod Viereck, Chief, Space Weather Services Branch, gave a talk on how SWPC is the nation's official source of space weather alerts, watches and warnings. The students also visited ESRL/GMD, to gain insight on scientific research and its worldwide air sampling network; the National Weather Forecasting Center and Science on a Sphere.

Lynn Andrews, MAES Magazine Publisher, said the tour and presentations were well thought out and definitely increased the students awareness of NOAA careers. "I was impressed with the quality of the tour and the forethought that the staff of NOAA put into it. The students learned a lot from the

scientists and discussed this in their industry tour testimonials during our working lunch."

According to Gil Saenz, MAES National VP of Operations, said the students who attend the National Leadership conference are at the top of their class.

During the two days of the conference, the students must participate in team project competitions where they develop a business proposal and present it to a panel of judges to determine which team has the best business proposal. The topics all consist of real life issues in the corporate world.

For more information on MAES, please visit their website at www.maes-natl.org.

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EEO Outreach and Education

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Rod Viereck, Chief Space Weather Service Branch, speaks to students about the Space Weather Prediction Center.



MAES students in lobby at the David Skaggs Research Center.

Exploring Carbon Footprints and Climate Clues

by Annie Reiser, ESRL - GSD

“More than Mud Pies”, “Statistics: Lies and Truths”, and “Treasure Hunting in the 21st Century”, were just some of the creatively named workshops designed to spark academic curiosity in girls attending this May’s “Women in Science” (WIS) event in Laramie sponsored by the Wyoming NASA Space Grant Consortium and the National Weather Service of Cheyenne, Wyo.

Over 300 girls ranging from grades 7-12 gathered at the University of Wyoming’s campus for a first-hand look at careers in science taught by accomplished women from diverse fields.

With the government van packed to the hilt, NOAA Boulder employees Annie Reiser, Beth Russell (working through Systems Research Group, Inc.), and Amy Wagner who works on behalf of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), headed for the event to share NOAA science with the eager youth.

More than 18 schools participated with some kids arriving from as far away as Gillette, WY. “We got up at three this morning to get here,” said one participant in a discussion about how driving increases our carbon footprint during Beth’s workshop, “Exploring Your Carbon Footprint”.

The girls couldn’t get enough of calculating their personal impact on the environment when Beth led them through the process of using an on-line carbon calculator. Many had never even heard of a carbon footprint and they became eager to share simple ways to reduce personal CO₂ emissions with their families and friends.



WIS participants showing off their NOAA icosahedrons

Amy instructed her class on “Earth’s Past Climates”, introducing the different methods by which researchers tell that history. “This is a coral sample,” she explained when holding up the same slab she had retrieved during one of her field study dives (shown earlier in her slide presentation).

Amy introduced the girls to careers in her field of paleoclimatology and highlighted some of the alluring aspects associated with working in the field, like international travel. Then the workshop turned hands-on when students investigated mock sediment samples, learning the detective work of a scientist studying certain climate periods. “I learned a lot of new things about how scientists study Earth’s past climate,” shared one participant.

OAR Labs Reaching Out to the Community

AOML - In cooperation with other NOAA-Miami line offices, NWS and NMFS, Erica Rule created and set up part of the display and provided numerous handouts on NOAA careers at the Miami-Dade Fair. Stan Goldenberg



AOML at Miami Dade Fair.

created handouts on the NOAA Seasonal Hurricane Forecast and helped staff the booth during the multi-week event. Approximately 560,000 people visited the Fair.

ARL-ATDD – Ray Hosker, retired ATDD employee, Ed Dumas and LaToya Myles participated as judges at the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair at the University of Tennessee. A national and local NOAA award was also presented to weather related projects by students. There were 330 students participating in the fair this year, ranging from ages 12 to 18. ATDD has been a supporter of the fair for approximately 10 years.

NSSL – Suzanne Van Cooten continued as co-chair and mentor to a Native American student enrolled as a M.S. candidate at the University of Oklahoma School of Meteorology. She was also a co-teacher for 9th grade science classes at Oklahoma Junior High School in Ada, OK. About 36% of the students are Native American. She taught modules on weather instruments, basic meteorology, and severe storm forecasts especially hail estimate techniques to recruit volunteers to support NSSL hail verification experiment.

PMEL - Outreach coordinator, Lauren Koellermeier, and research scientist, Sonya Brown, participated in the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Career Day in February. The event which draws students from elementary to college age from over 200 local schools, is geared towards showing students what opportunities in marine science exist in the Washington Puget Sound region.

Lauren and Sonya brought along PMEL toys such as the tsunami buoy model to educate students about the tsunami buoy array and warning system as well as various



Sonya showing students some oceanographic instruments that are used on buoys along the equator.

instruments designed to measure oceanographic parameters such as wind speed, rainfall and temperature to demonstrate the Tropical Ocean Atmosphere (TAO) project. Time was also spent educating children and adults on what NOAA is and how it plays a role in our government as well as scientific research.

GLERL - Sixteen teams of students from high schools throughout Michigan and Ohio competed in the 11th Annual National Ocean Sciences Bowl held at the School of Natural Resources and Environment on the University of Michigan's central campus. Numerous GLERL staff participated as judges and officials during the day-long event.

Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008

On September 25, 2008, the President signed the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 ("ADA Amendments Act" or "Act"). The Act emphasizes that the definition of disability should be construed in favor of broad coverage of individuals to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of the ADA and generally shall not require extensive analysis.

The Act makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of EEOC's ADA regulations. The effect of these changes is to make it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he or she has a disability within the meaning of the ADA.

The Act retains the ADA's basic definition of "disability" as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. However, it changes the way that these statutory terms should be interpreted in several ways. Most significantly, the Act:

- directs EEOC to revise that portion of its regulations defining the term "substantially limits";
- expands the definition of "major life activities" by including two non-exhaustive lists;
- the first list includes many activities that the EEOC has recognized (e.g., walking) as well as activities that EEOC has not specifically recognized (e.g., reading, bending, and communicating);
- the second list includes major bodily functions (e.g., "functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions");
- states that mitigating measures other than "ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses" shall not be considered in assessing whether an individual has a disability;
- clarifies that an impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active;
- changes the definition of "regarded as" so that it no longer requires a showing that the employer perceived the individual to be substantially limited in a major life activity, and instead says that an

applicant or employee is "regarded as" disabled if he or she is subject to an action prohibited by the ADA (e.g., failure to hire or termination) based on an impairment that is not transitory and minor;

- provides that individuals covered only under the "regarded as" prong are not entitled to reasonable accommodation.

EEOC will be evaluating the impact of these changes on its enforcement guidances and other publications addressing the ADA.

Effective Date: January 1, 2009.

Source: EEOC: www.eeoc.gov.

MSPB Judges Discuss Impact of ADAAA and Make Recommendations

Three MSPB Judges from Denver provided a presentation on the ADAAA on April 7, 2009 at the NOAA David Skaggs Research Center in Boulder, CO. In their handout they gave the following summary:

Impact of ADAAA

- More individuals covered under ADAAA
- Likely more Reasonable Accommodations (RA) requested
- Likely more RA granted
- Likely less medical evidence requested because whether someone is disabled will be more obvious although sound medical evidence still critical
- Likely more medical inability cases filed
- Likely more cases challenging medical qualifications
- Likely more RA cases filed
- Likely more courts will rule against employers.

Recommendations for employers

- Re-evaluate employer Reasonable Accommodations procedures and policies.
- Carefully train all managers on employer RA procedures and RA obligations.
- Carefully evaluate your medical qualification standards.
- Carefully assess any decisions based on medical evidence, e.g. medical inability to perform.

Legislative History: www.law.georgetown.edu/archiveada

May - Asian Pacific Islander Month *Work Group Addresses Misperceptions of Asians and Pacific Islanders*

Who are Asians and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)?

They include Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, South Asians (Indians, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankans, Nepalese, and Burmese), Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Mien) as well as Indonesians and Malaysians. The diversity of cultural groups within the AAPI population makes a full description of some groups very difficult. To further complicate matters, some groups, such as the Indonesians and Afghans, are of such recent status and are growing so rapidly that accurate information is scarce. According to the 2004 American Community – Asians Census report, the population of the Asian and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. consists of:

23.4% are Chinese	18.6% are Asian Indian
17.8% are Filipino	10.5% are Vietnamese
10.3% are Korean	7.0% are Other Pacific Islander
6.9% are Japanese	5.5% are Other Asians

Well Represented in Federal Government?

According to data provided to the EEOC, there are 2.6 million individuals employed in the federal sector, of which 5.9 percent are Asian American and Pacific Islanders. While the data indicates that Asians and Pacific Islanders are well-represented in the overall federal workforce, at the SES level, the percentage of AAPIs is slightly over 2 percent.

Model Minority?

This community has been facing a number of misperceptions or stereotypes – for example, AAPIs are quiet, hard-working, family-oriented, technically-oriented, good at math and science, but are also passive, non-confrontational and antisocial. However, while some of these stereotypes have positive characteristics, they have become the framework of barriers establishing glass or bamboo ceilings which prevent AAPIs from moving into the upper tiers of an organization. In addition, AAPIs face sticky floors which hold AAPIs at a particular level for a prolonged period of time and other obstacles. Good or bad, these are the myths that have created real barriers.

Source: EEOC. These are excerpts from EEOC report. Read Full Report at www.eeoc.gov/federal/report/aapi.html

Asian Representation at NOAA and OAR

Source: NOAA Civil Rights Office - April 2009

NOAA:

Asian employees represented 4.7 percent (644) of the 13,623 employees at NOAA, compared to 3.8 percent in the

- Asian men represent 2.8% of the workforce, compared to 1.9% of the CLF.
- Asian women represent 1.7% of the workforce compared to 1.7% of the CLF.
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander men represented 0.1% (16) of the workforce compared to 0.1% of the CLF.
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander women represent 0.2% (23) of the workforce compared to 0.1% of the CLF.

OAR:

Asian employees represented 5.0% (38) of the 751 OAR employees, compared to 3.8% in the CLF.

- Asian men represent 3.7% (28), compared to 1.9% in the CLF.
- Asian women represent 1.3% (10) compared to 1.9% in the CLF and are below the CLF.
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander men and women are absent from the OAR workforce. Civilian Labor Workforce (CLF) - 2000 Census.

Resources:

FAPAC (Federal Asian Pacific American Council)

www.fapac.org

FAPAC is an organization that promotes equal opportunity and cultural diversity for APAs within the Federal and District of Columbia governments. *This group was involved in the report to the EEOC.*



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WEBSITE

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ABOUT US

The EEO Office provides services to NOAA Research employees and to applicants for employment. We are the local point of contact for EEO and Diversity issues. We coordinate EEO program activities and provide EEO training.

The EEO office functions are as follows:

EMPOWERMENT: Consultation services to employees, managers and applicants for employment.

EXPOSURE: Recruitment and outreach activities for short and long-term recruitment.

EDUCATION: Federal EEO Mandated training.

EVALUATION: Monitor employment statistics to prepare reports for NOAA, DOC, EEOC and OPM.

NEWSLETTER

Connections is published quarterly by the OAR EEO Office. The purpose is to share accomplishments and to link Diversity, EEO and Science within all of OAR laboratories and divisions. If you have any newsletter ideas, suggestions and stories, please send to:

Georgia Madrid - georgia.madrid@noaa.gov.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP:

If you believe you have been subject to discrimination on the basis of your race, color, religion, sex, age (over 40), disability, sexual orientation or retaliation for participating in activities protected by the civil rights statutes, you must contact an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discrimination to preserve your rights under the law.

Please contact the **NOAA Civil Rights Office** to initiate EEO counseling:

Voice: 301-713-0500

Toll Free: 1-800-452-6728

TDD: 301-713-0982

FAX: 301-713-0983

Website: www.eeo.noaa.gov

Mediation

NOAA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The NOAA ADR Office provides mediation and other services and seeks early resolution.

Voice: 206-526-6171

Fax: 206-527-6928.

Website: www.adr.noaa.gov

