



CONNECTIONS

Linking EEO, Diversity and Science

Volume 1, Issue 7

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

Nov/Dec. 2009

EEO/Diversity Kick-Off Reenergizes Committee Members

The OAR EEO/Diversity Kickoff brought together the OAR laboratory EEO Managers and EEO Advisory members on October 20-21, 2009 in Silver Spring, MD. The focus was to reenergize, refocus and begin a dialogue on the direction of the committees.

The kickoff was sponsored by the OAR EEO Office and was the first face to face meeting of the committee members since 2005. The laboratory EEO Managers and EEO Advisory Committee members are collateral duty volunteers who serve as the communication link between the EEO Office and the OAR labs and program offices.



First Row: Sandi Aschert, Debby Kay, Erica Rule, Cassandra Barnes
 Second Row: Nanette Serkes, Bob Rabin, Debra Dailey-Fisher, Anne Clites, Becky Rios, Donna Gray, Melissa Christianson
 Third Row: Buz Taylor, Valencia McNair, Brian Gorton, Gayle Elkins, Sam Williams, Sarah Mark, Misti Hinson, Nicole Mason, Sabrina Taylor, Katy Stewart, Paul Johnson



Veraunda Jackson, Esquire

The first day featured EEO/Diversity talks by two presenters who were well received. Veraunda Jackson, founder and CEO of EHAP Inc., a professional and personal development company, was the opening plenary speaker. Her theme was, "Things are not always as

they seem." She talked about having passion in our work because we never know how our work will impact others.

One attendee commented that Veraunda's talk was "incredible and very inspirational with wonderful examples of diversity stories."



Dr. Joel Freeman

The afternoon speaker was Dr. Joel Freeman, CEO/President of the Freeman Institute, who facilitated a diversity presentation titled, *There is Value in Diversity*. Dr. Freeman is also the co-author of the book and DVD, *Return to Glory*, that highlights

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the historical contributions and achievements of African Americans and addresses the effects of racism on individuals and American society. All members received a copy of the DVD to share within their labs/program offices.

The second day was a work planning day. The focus was on the roles and responsibilities of the committees, review of the NOAA Administrative Order 215-6 that provides guidance for all EEO Advisory Committees in NOAA, current review of OAR EEO policies and an opportunity to address issues and concerns.

Dr. Richard Spinrad, OAR Assistant Administrator, addressed the group and said that OAR management strongly supports the EEO program. He challenged the group to think outside the box to not only build a strong program and ensure compliance but to harness OAR's uniqueness to go above and beyond. He said we all need to continue to work together to ensure our workforce is as diverse as the science conducted at OAR.

The overall assessment of the kickoff was positive. One person commented that it was a great program that was sorely needed, "I think we are in a much better place and better able to function." Another person added, "Overall, I felt we accomplished a lot. We met the goals on the agenda and had some informative discussions."

There were many ideas and suggestions that were brought forth to the EEO Office staff that will help the office move forward with new initiatives in ensuring OAR laboratory commitment to EEO/Diversity.

Committee Members in Attendance

EEO Laboratory Managers:

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Donna Gray – ARL | Sandi Aschert – ESRL |
| Nanette Serkes – ESRL/CSD | Brian Gorton – ESRL/PSD |
| Marsha Duggins – GFDL | Erick Locklear - CPO |
| Sara Mark – GLERL (representing Sandra Salyers) | |
| Gayle Elkins – PMEL (representing Cindy Loitsch) | |

EEO Committee Members:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Katy Stewart – ESRL (Chair) | Becky Rios – EEO (Secretary) |
| Patrena McGruder – ARL | Erica Rule – AOML |
| Melissa Christianson – ESRL/GSD | Debra Dailey Fisher – ESRL/CSD |
| Misti Hinson – ESRL/GMD | Buz Taylor – GFDL |
| Anne Clites – GLERL | Bob Rabin – NSSL |
| Valencia McNair – PMEL | Sabrina Taylor – CFO/MODD |
| Debby Kay – CFO/BFAD | Sam Williams - CPO |
| Miguel Lugo – Sea Grant | Cassandra Barnes, PPE |
| Carolyn McDonald – CFO/MODD | |

Latino Students participate in Leadership Training

The 19th Annual Latino Youth Leadership conference for Boulder Valley high school students was held on Oct. 2, 2009 at the University of Colorado. It was sponsored by the Boulder Valley School District Institutional Equity and Multicultural Education. Students participated in a variety of workshops on topics such as Immigration, Health Disparities, College Life and Career opportunities.



University of Colorado students promote college.

One workshop, "Vida Sagrada" (Blessed/Sacred Life), was very popular with the students. It was presented by David Young, Curandero (healer). The students separated into gender groups. Each group answered questions, wrote down their views and discussed what they liked and disliked about each other in regards to friendships, relationships and respect. The groups later joined back together and spoke about each other's differences, respect for each other, honesty, and being supportive at school and at home.

All workshops were well attended and in their evaluations, the students said they left knowing that they were important as individuals, and proud of their Latino heritage. Students also said that they left with invaluable skills on how to help deal with racism and stereotyping.

The conference goals are to build unity and leadership within the Latino communities, and promote pride and awareness of Latino cultures. There were about 135 students who attended the program, along with local exhibitors. For the 3rd year, the OAR EEO Office participated in the planning committee.

AOML – OCEANS program reaches women and minority students

Oceanographer Evan B. Forde taught the OCEANS (Oceanographic Curriculum Empowering Achievement in Natural Sciences) curriculum, that he created, for the fourth time in the last year from October 20th through November 5th. Evan created the curriculum to immerse students in a supportive learning environment while studying the biology, physics, chemistry, and geology of the world's oceans. The class is designed to create a spark of interest and excitement towards math and science for students who are not reaching their potential in those critical disciplines. Evan reports that even though anyone could have attended the last class, more than 3/4 of the students were females and minorities.



Forde teaches students how to chemically determine PH of sea water.

GLERL - 3rd Place National Ocean Science Bowl (NOSB) Winners Tour GLERL

GLERL hosted a Great Lakes tour in July for 3rd Place NOSB Winners from Cranston, RI. The team visited NOAA's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center located at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve in Alpena, MI. At the Maritime Heritage Center they learned about the history of Great lakes shipping and the many shipwrecks in the sanctuary. They visited a shipwreck site in Thunder Bay, the Monahansett, nine miles off shore and two lighthouses in Presque Isle, MI. The team then travelled to Grayling, MI for a canoe and kayak trip down the Au Sable River. They also visited GLERL's Lake Michigan Field Station in Muskegon, MI where they learned about GLERL research programs and Great Lakes issues, participated in a research cruise aboard the R/V Laurentian, and enjoyed the Lake Michigan shoreline.



Team Members: Pasha Sadikov, Sara Hogarth, Meaghan Sullivan, Alexa Choy and Steven Krous (coach).

NSSL - Graduate Student participates in SACNAS conference

by Anthony Brown

My name is Anthony Brown. I am a Master's student in meteorology at the University of Oklahoma. NOAA is sponsoring my Master's research through a cooperative institute at OU. I received my Bachelor's degree in meteorology from OU as well. I am a citizen of the Comanche Nation. I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and have spent almost all of my life there.

I recently attended the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) conference in Dallas, Texas. As a representative of NOAA, I was asked to be on a panel the first morning of the conference. The goal of the panel was to encourage students to take advantage of funding opportunities that NOAA provides. As a panelist, I told about my educational path and my future plans. That evening, I participated in the conversation with scientists. I enjoyed meeting fellow meteorologists both in the professional realm and those who are fellow students. It was interesting to me, as a graduate student, to have the dual perspective of being both a student and a scientist. I could both give encouragement and advice to undergraduates as well as gain information from experienced meteorologists. I also represented NOAA at the exhibit booth during the conference, but had time to view other exhibit booths as well.

I enjoyed networking with fellow NOAA employees as well as other students from different colleges. The conference was very accommodating to networking through its meals and social events like the Pechanga and Pow-wow, both of which I enjoyed attending.

Special Emphasis Observance - American Indian Heritage Month

Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCU's) a topic of Interest at American Indian Heritage Month Training

The DFEB/AIPC hosted its American Indian Heritage Training on November 19, 2009. There were over 150 attendees from various Federal agencies in the Denver/Boulder metro area, including NOAA employees. OAR was a major sponsor of the event.

The theme, *Where We Are: Issues, Challenges and Hope in Indian Country*, presented topics on Native rights issues, TCU's and a Colorado Indian Country Dialogue.

Modern Day Warriors, a short documentary on the rise of the Native rights and tribal sovereignty movement in the 1960's to present day was shown. Carly Hare, Native American Rights Fund (NARF) Community Foundation Director, said NARF was born out of this era and gave an overview of American Indian issues impacting Native Americans today such as human rights, global warming, religious freedom and education. She highlighted issues brought forth by Tribal leaders attending the first annual White House Tribal Nations Conference with President Barack Obama in November 2009. Carly emphasized that American Indians are not just a "minority" group but have a unique government to government relationship with the Federal government.

Rick Williams, CEO and Director, American Indian College Fund, discussed how TCU's are community centers because they provide opportunities for the community as a whole. He said that TCU's are "underfunded miracles" because they not only integrate their cultural practices into the curriculums but are increasing its representation of Native students in fields such as Nursing and Natural Resources. He gave examples of the College of Menominee Nation who is a leader in sustainable forestry practices and Oglala Lakota Community College in South Dakota, that has an excellent Nursing program. He encouraged everyone to visit a TCU and suggested a future topic on how to implement the executive order for Federal agencies.

Carl Etsitty, Regional Biotechnologist, USDA/APHIS, spoke about EPA's best practices in establishing meaningful relationships with TCU's that have resulted in the placement of American Indians at EPA. He also discussed USDA/APHIS's current Memorandum of Understanding with Tohono O'odham Community College and the University of Arizona. The program is designed to expose high school



TCU's panel members: Carl Etsitty, Helen Littlejohn and Rick Williams.

students interested in plants, agriculture and natural resources to curriculum available at a community college and a mainstream college.

The afternoon highlighted a panel of prominent American Indian leaders in the Denver Indian community. Jay Grimm, Denver Indian Center Director, discussed their job placement program and how Federal agencies can participate in their job fairs and discussed the need for more effective partnership.

Overall the conference was a huge success. As one attendee commented, "Please continue with your innovative ideas for topics. The topics/trainings were well organized, very informative and an educational experience."

RESOURCES:

- **DFEB/AIPC:** www.aipc.osmre.gov
- **AIHEC (American Indian Higher Education Consortium) – List of TCU's –** www.aihec.org
- **White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges & Universities -**www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whtc/edlite-index.html
- **Tribal College Journal –** <http://www.tribalcollegejournal.org/>
- **NCAI (National Congress of American Indians) –** www.ncai.org
- **Tribal-Federal Relations & Consultation:** www.ncai.org/Consultations-with-Tribal-Gove.449.o.html
- **AISES (American Indian Science & Engineering Society) –** www.aises.org
- **SAIGE (Society of American Indian Government Employees) –** www.saige.org.
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming EEO Special Emphasis Program Events, National Outreach/Recruitment Conferences and EEO/Diversity Related Training Opportunities.

| Date | Event/Conference | Location | For More Information: |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Dec. 9-11, 2009 | Perspectives on Employment with Disabilities Conference | Bethesda, MD | www.graduateschool.edu |
| Jan. 21, 2010 | Denver Federal Executive Board (DFEB)/ Martin Luther King Unity Training | Denver, CO | www.denver.feb.gov |
| Feb. 17-20, 2010 | U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute | Chicago, IL | www.uskli.org |
| Feb. 11-13, 2010 | AISES (American Indian Science & Engineering Society) Leadership Conference | Albuquerque, NM | www.aises.org |
| Mar. 26-29, 2010 | AIHEC (American Indian Higher Education Consortium) Spring Student Conference | Phoenix, AZ | www.aihec.org |
| March. 31-April 4, 2010 | National Society of Black Engineers "Engineering a Global Impact" | Toronto, Canada | www.national.nsbe.org |
| April 12-14, 2010 | 4 th Annual HR & EEO in the Federal Workplace Conference | New York, NY | www.fedHRconferences.com |
| May 3-7, 2010 | FAPAC (Federal Asian Pacific American Council) 25th Annual Leadership Training | National Harbor, MD | www.fapac.org |
| May 2010 | National Image, Inc | | www.nationalimageinc.org |
| June 14-18, 2010 | SAIGE (Society of American Indian Government Employees) | Uncasville, CT | www.saige.org |
| June 27-30, 2010 | Society for Human Resources Mgmt | San Diego, CA | www.shrm.org |
| July 10-13, 2010 | National Council of LaRaza | San Antonio, TX | www.nclr.org |
| July 12-17, 2010 | LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) | Albuquerque, NM | www.lulac.org |
| July 12-16, 2010 | FEW (Federally Employed Women) | New Orleans, LA | www.few.org |

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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 programs. 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

