

IV. CHARGE TO THE CONFERENCE

Rear Admiral Evelyn J. Fields
Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, NOAA

Dr. N. Joyce Payne, Director
Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges, National Association of
State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)

Rear Admiral Fields, in her charge to the participants from the NOAA perspective, reminded participants that “the Expanding Opportunities effort is directly related to NOAA's attempt to diversify its workforce and to develop access to the talent needed for the fulfillment of its mission.” She urged that “as we develop NOAA's vision for the 21st Century, it is critical to develop a NOAA workforce representative of the diversity present in this country,” encouraging participants to discover and use the potential talent in communities that are still under- represented. Rear Admiral Fields charged the participants “to build a model of what makes partnership work.”

Dr. Payne had the responsibility of charging the Conference from the perspective of the higher education community. She thanked JSU for hosting the Conference and commended Dr. Jearld for his “tremendous tenacity” in his commitment to equality and fairness. She began her charge with stark words, “inequality for minorities in the sciences is profoundly pervasive,” acknowledging that from the academic perspective there are still not enough minorities in marine and atmospheric sciences. She charged the Conference participants “to reaffirm commitments to making a radical change in expanding opportunities” by building sustainable alliances and “removing those policy and programmatic impediments that undermine the nation's ability to produce a central intellectual capital for the world marketplace.” Dr. Payne went on to say, “We must leave this Conference with the renewed commitment to strengthen partnerships between colleges and universities, Commerce and NOAA, and scientific enterprise. We must leave this Conference with the renewed commitment to create a foundation for inclusion, innovation, and investment—three very basic elements to extending equal educational opportunity.” Dr. Payne concluded by asking everyone at the Conference to commit to equality and fairness not just in their professions, but in their entire lives.