

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The third *Expanding Opportunities in Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences Conference*, sponsored by the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration's (NOAA) Line Offices, was held April 1-3, 2001 at Jackson State University (JSU), Jackson, Mississippi. Representatives from the NOAA offices, together with faculty and administrators from JSU, other Historically Black and Minority-Serving Colleges and Universities (HBMSCUs), other Higher Education Institutions and federal agencies, and industry participated in planning the Conference under the leadership of Dr. Ambrose Jearld, Jr. of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). More than 400 people, drawn from federal, state, and academic institutions, as well as industry were in attendance. Most importantly, there were a large number of students from a cross-section of colleges and universities.

The Conference provided opportunities for people from different institutions and business to network. A pre-Conference reception gave participants an opportunity to get acquainted and "loosen up" before the work began. At the end of the reception, alumni of the Jackson State University Atmospheric Sciences Program presented a cake to recognize the 25th anniversary of the initiation of the program. Several alumni were in attendance as well as NOAA personnel who were in some way involved in the program's development. Mr. Freddie Ziegler and Mr. Bill Parker coordinated the celebration with current JSU Meteorology staff. A business, technology, and career trade fair was held in conjunction with the Conference where representatives of NOAA and the industry presented their diverse research and employment interests, and students could get first-hand information on career paths in the marine and atmospheric sciences. Organizations that participated in the trade fair are listed in Appendix D.

Conference participants were welcomed by Dr. Ronald Mason, Jr., President, Jackson State University; The Honorable Harvey Johnson, Jr., Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi; and Rear Admiral Evelyn J. Fields, Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, NOAA. The charge to the group was jointly given by Rear Admiral Fields and Dr. N. Joyce Payne, Director, Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges, National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). Four other featured speakers addressed the group: Dr. Ronald Mason, Jr., Dr. Michael Sissenwine, Ms. DeLois A. Cutter, and Dr. Darrell Jay Grimes.

In a panel presentation, NOAA Line Office representatives presented overviews of their programs and discussed career opportunities. A lively question and answer session followed. Four concurrent workshops, focused on academia, student life, private and public sector business, offered participants an opportunity to examine successful models of increasing diversity and to learn from others' experiences. A plenary session concentrated on identifying and developing untapped resources in the effort to build sustainable alliances. Five working groups were asked to assess the realistic implementation of recommendations and to distribute responsibilities among academia, the public and private sectors to maximize success.

The Conference was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Nancy Foster who championed the Expanding Opportunities cause beginning with the first Conference in 1995.