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the laboratory connection

your community's link
to information, opportunities, and people
at Los Alamos National Laboratory

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word
from

the Community Relations Office

At Los Alamos National

Laboratory, diversity is not what we seek, it is an integral part of who we are. Our nation is becoming more diverse with each passing year, and as a national institution, the Laboratory must strive to reflect the values of all of the groups that contribute to our strength and prosperity.

Six years ago, the Diversity Office was established at the Lab to formulate initiatives and address concerns about diversity in the workplace. A year later, most of the diversity working groups and a diversity council were formed and began meeting regularly. The creation of the Diversity/Affirmative Action Board this summer is the latest in this series of steps taken to promote and sustain diversity at the Lab.

Diversity Office staff have several missions. They educate Lab managers and workers about how diversity assists the Lab in realizing its vision, as well as provide diversity training on a small-group basis. They consult on retention issues and assist with some recruitment events. They support efforts of the diversity working groups by providing funds, administrative liaisons, and communication support through the diversity website. They formulate quantifiable measures to determine and track their programs' impact in order to demonstrate that diversity makes good business sense. And perhaps most importantly, they support an organizational philosophy that expresses respect and trust among the Laboratory workforce. They are committed to fostering a positive work environment, with opportunities for advancement, training, and challenges for all.

Diversity/Affirmative Action Board Will Find Common Ground

The concept of diversity implies both individualism and commonality. It also implies dimensions that are visible, like gender, as well as differences that are not visible, like technical expertise and background. At the Laboratory, we want our workforce to reflect the many groups whose contributions have built our nation. Although those groups may have their individual concerns, we all share a common goal: to make the world a better and safer place by developing and applying the best science and technology.

The Laboratory's diversity program has included the formation and support of working groups for Hispanic, American Indian, Women, Asian-American, African-American, Deaf, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex issues. Our ongoing efforts to foster and maintain diversity in all disciplines at all levels throughout the Lab

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The Lab's new D/AA board met for the first time in August. Discussing strategy are, left to right, Omar Wooten; Vera Aguiño; Amy Sahota; Stevie Strottman; and Vann Bynum.

Associate Lab Directors Tom Meyer, left, and Richard Mah confer during the first meeting of the Diversity/Affirmative Action Board.

Diversity
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have resulted in a formal initiative to involve senior managers as champions for these issues. To pilot the champion concept, three diversity working groups were paired with senior, executive-level officials who attended regular meetings and who helped devise strategies to reach out to populations that are or have historically been underrepresented at the Lab.

Results of a recent work environment survey showed that many employees felt the individual diversity working groups had not been effective working separately on institutional issues. So this summer, the Lab's Diversity Office and Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) created a new Diversity/Affirmative Action Board. The diversity champions will address concerns of their fellow board members: two delegates from each working group, one delegate from the previous Diversity Council and seven delegates from the workforce at large. The board met for the first time in August and heard Roland West, a consultant and facilitator, tell them that they will be the effort's driving force, working with management to bring about change through strategic and innovative ideas.

Tom Meyer, associate laboratory director for Strategic Research, has been the Lab champion for the Asian Pacific Islander diversity working group, which gained prominence after the Wen Ho Lee case led some to boycott Lab jobs. He said that his group's visibility may have overshadowed the concerns of other groups.

"That situation drove us to consider the idea of a larger council to bring the groups together," he said.

"We are all committed to the same goal, of bringing together the most capable people we can find, regardless of race or ethnic origin."

Diversity Office leader Lisa Gutierrez said the new board will function as an experiment on implementing diversity and teamwork theories. "To paraphrase Ghandi, we will all have to become the change we want to see in our LANL world," she said. "With this board, we are testing how to leverage our many differences to get to a better multicultural outcome for the entire Laboratory."

Richard Mah, associate laboratory director for Weapons Engineering and Manufacturing, was appointed champion for the Hispanic Diversity Working Group about a year ago. He attended most of their meetings, participated in the group's retreat and developed some friendships from among its members. While he will miss these interactions, Mah said he fully supports the concept of a board to encompass all the working groups.

"I don't think that anyone would disagree with how important diversity is," Mah said, "but there are a lot of groups with different interests. It's important that they all understand that there are commonalities," Mah said. "That's what makes the job do-able."

Don Cobb, associate lab director for Threat Reduction, was formerly the champion for the African-American Working Group and will participate on the new diversity board.

"I really enjoyed supporting the African-American working group, helping to unblock impediments they encountered and doing what I

could to help the Human Resources recruiting team," he said. "As a member of the new board, I will be a champion for all of the groups."

Cobb said one of his most important jobs will be to encourage and promote employees from across all categories so that the Lab and the country will benefit from new ideas and skills.

"One of the most gratifying things you can do as a manager is to bring in new people and see them be successful," he said. "Success here comes in teaming. Success comes with new thoughts and ideas. Since 9/11, we need new ideas at the science and technology level like never before."

Meyer, who comes from a university background, has seen diversity initiatives succeed elsewhere. He said the Lab is in the middle of that process.

"We'll know we are successful when we no longer need a Diversity Board," he said. "Until then, we need to keep diversity on the agenda at a high level."

In many areas of the Lab, diversity is already a reality. Mah's directorate, which takes care of the Lab's nuclear stockpile, is an example of an organization that has largely



Lisa Gutierrez, diversity office director, and facilitator Roland West discuss the meeting agenda.

Lab is Home to Several Hispanic Scholarship Fund Recipients

Last month, college and graduate students from our region had the opportunity to learn about career and internship opportunities at the Lab at the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Career Exploration Day.

The event was designed to acquaint students in the math, science, engineering, and other technology fields with Lab programs and their present and future hiring needs. Participants came from throughout New Mexico, Southern Colorado, and West Texas. They heard presentations on the Lab's history, hot jobs here, mentoring and internship opportunities, diversity, and safety.

The San Francisco-based Hispanic Scholarship Fund was created in 1975 to advance and promote college opportunities for Hispanic Americans across the United States and Puerto Rico. A number of current and former Lab employees have been recipients of scholarships through the fund. Several participated in a panel discussion about their educational and career experiences.

Erika Sanchez is a budget analyst for the Threat Reduction Directorate. After graduating from McCurdy in 1992, she attended New Mexico State University (NMSU) for two years, then transferred to the University of New Mexico (UNM.) She intended to study engineering or computer science, but found accounting to be a better fit for her talents. She lived with family in



Former scholarship recipients take questions at a panel discussion. Left to right, Erika Sanchez, Roxanne Tapia and Daniel Mendoza. Standing is Mick Trujillo from the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Albuquerque and received some assistance from her parents, but most of her education was financed through student loans.

"I saw an announcement for the Hispanic Scholarship Fund in a weekly bulletin put out by the Anderson School of Business," she said. "I applied and got \$1,000. The next year I applied again and got another \$1,000 scholarship and didn't have to take out any more loans."

In addition to the financial assistance, Sanchez said the Hispanic Scholarship Fund offered valuable networking opportunities.

"They have an awards assembly in Albuquerque attended by all the corporate sponsors, and we had a chance to network with those people for that one night," she said. "It was a great opportunity to advance our careers."

Every year there are several hundred scholarship recipients from New Mexico. Roxanne Tapia received help from the fund for several years while an undergraduate at Adams State College in Colorado. Tapia was a business and computer science major, and is now a computer programmer for the Biosciences Division at the Lab.

"The Hispanic Scholarship Fund was invaluable to me while I attended Adams State," she said. "It allowed me the freedom to focus on my studies and extracurricular activities, rather than having to work all the time to fund my education."

Daniel Mendoza is a materials engineer at the Lab who received scholarships from the Fund while an undergrad at New Mexico Tech and while working on his Master's at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. He heard about the scholarship opportunity at a meeting of his chapter of the Mexican American Engineering Society.

Mendoza also found the scholarship to represent worth more than the money it brought in. "It helped me out, but it also gave me satisfaction that there were companies out there helping the Hispanic community," he said. "Not getting a scholarship wouldn't have stopped me from going to college, but a lot of Hispanic students can't afford to go to school without it. It's reassuring that there's something out there for them."

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achieved visible diversity at all levels. Mah is an Asian Pacific Islander, his principal deputy is Hispanic and another deputy is American Indian. His technical chief of staff is Hispanic, the administrative chief of staff is female, and of six program managers, two are Hispanic and two are women. A Hispanic woman

heads the Weapons Quality Office, and another woman heads the Engineering Sciences and Applications Division.

Amy Sahota, the Lab's OEO office director, pointed out that the new board will be the first of its kind. "The board will help the Lab to

address employee concerns from an institutional perspective and explore recruitment/retention/promotion mechanisms to increase the diversity of its workforce at all levels," she said. "Senior management's involvement as Diversity Champions demonstrates our commitment to make the process work."

Reaching Out with Education, Awareness and Unity



Min Park, chairman of the Asian-American Diversity Working Group

One of the Asian-American Diversity Working Group (AADWG) goals is recruitment and retention of early-career Asian Americans.

“We have a recruitment subcommittee that attended the Organization of Chinese Americans Conference (OCA) in July this year,” said Min Park, chairperson of the AADWG. “Some of our members went out to change the image of the Laboratory and to identify some potential candidates for employment.”

The 24th Annual OCA National Convention was held in Salt Lake City, Utah and its theme was “Celebrating Unity through Diversity.”

Park, originally from Korea, said that he and his family now enjoy living in Los Alamos.

“It is a good town for foreigners and minorities, because the majority of people are intelligent and educated enough not to mistreat others because of ignorance,” he said.

This group sponsored this year’s Asian American Heritage Month in May and invited Asian journalist Sam Chu Lin to speak. Chu Lin’s presentation was titled “The Search for Asian-American Heroes – How Asian-American/Pacific Islanders Have Helped to Build a Better America.” Chu Lin, a reporter for KTTV Fox 11 news in Los Angeles, emphasized that Asian Americans have done more for America than build the transcontinental railroad.

“Asian-American heroes can be well known or just the guy next door,” he said. “We need to let others know about Asian-Pacific

Islanders and we need to go out and learn about our neighbors so that we can give back to the community.”

This diversity working group is also trying to build a community for students within, as well as outside, the Laboratory. They hosted an information booth at the Los Alamos County Fair and Rodeo in August. Members contributed their time to provide information about working at the Laboratory.

Another outreach initiative that is underway, developed by Hiroshi Hoida of the Safeguards Systems group and Jasmine Pan of the Advanced Information and Business Application Development group, is an informal brown bag lunch for all Asian employees. New and senior employees will be able to discuss experiences, ideas for career advancement, and network. The first brown bag lunch was held in August and speaker Ping Lee, from the Lab Director’s office, discussed his career at the Laboratory. Jasmine Pan also provided information on official lab programs such as the mentoring program and courses offered by the Human Resources Group Training and Development.

Lab’s Women’s Diversity Working Group Reflects Diverse Interests

To Debi Guffee, employee of CMR Facility Operations and chair of the Women’s Diversity Working Group (WDWG), the group is not only about women’s issues but also about creating a family-friendly workplace. While the charter of the group includes initiatives such as recruitment, mentoring, and underutilization, the kinds of issues it hears about are also those of interest to families such as dependent care and flex time.

Although the group continues with activities pioneered by previous members

such as the annual Mentoring Awards, Women’s History Month in March and Breast Cancer Awareness month in October, it also responds to suggestions for involvement with new issues. Guffee said the WDWG can supply an organization to help ensure that issues don’t get lost over time.

“The mentoring awards are a great way to recognize mentors who are not part of a formal program,” she said. “These people are mentoring women out of the goodness of their hearts, not because they are getting any other official recognition,” said Guffee.

This year more than 30 people were nominated for the award and nine were chosen and announced in May. “Fostering women’s talents in the workplace is good for everyone,” she said.

Women’s history month is also a good way to raise people’s awareness of the roles women have played — and continue to play — in history, Guffee said. As an example, she pointed out that this year the group brought in one of the first women fighter pilots in the Navy from Virginia. “Women have helped sustain the American

Fostering Diversity by Improving Communication and Outreach

The new Diversity Affirmative Action Board is a good complement to the working groups, whose goal is raising awareness according to J.Chris Echohawk, chairperson of the Lab's American Indian Diversity Working Group (AIDWG).

Echohawk, who is originally from Colorado, is a technical staff member in the Lab's Environmental Geology and Risk Analysis group. He received his B.S. in applied mathematics and aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado and his M.S. in watershed science from Colorado State University. He was hired at the Laboratory through the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES).

"I gave the LANL recruiting booth a resume at an AISES Conference, which found its way to the LANL Tribal Relations Team," said Echohawk. "They contacted me and asked if I was interested in the Lab, and then set up interviews with three groups here. I flew in to interview and job offers followed."

When Echohawk first moved to the Los Alamos area, he was unaware of the town's demographics and ethnic composition. He currently lives in the El Rancho area.

"I find the people in Los Alamos to be very friendly, though the composition of the population of the town compared to other neighboring communities was surprising

when I first moved here," he said. "I believe this makes it even more important to pursue community outreach activities at the Lab and to sponsor cultural awareness programs for the employees and the public. The Lab's Heritage Month series is a good example of this important work. It is also vital that the Laboratory strive to work with the leaders of the neighboring communities to address outstanding issues and improve communication. If the Laboratory pursued a policy of isolation, it would foster that feeling in minority employees."

The AIDWG tries to encourage American Indian students to come to the Laboratory by increasing interactions through providing scholarship information and attending and judging science fairs.

This working group has also increased its interactions with summer students at the Lab.

"We try to set up a couple of events each year for the students to meet each other and become familiar with other American Indian staff members at the Laboratory," said Barbara Grimes, a member of the AIDWG.

Echohawk said that one of the functions of this working group is outreach to the community. Outreach doesn't require a lot

of budget because these are mostly volunteer activities.

"We work in education, recruiting students and attending scholarship and summer employment presentations to provide our firsthand information about what working here is like. We also assist other Native American organizations, such as AISES, with volunteer work," he explained.

Last fall's AISES National Conference was held in Albuquerque, and many Laboratory employees and AIDWG members served as volunteers. The group also sponsor the annual American Indian Heritage Month each April, and this year invited Tex Hall, the President of the National Congress of American Indians as keynote speaker.

"We had a panel discussion on various tribal issues," he said. "These events are open to the public and we see them widely attended, with some visitors coming from Santa Fe and Albuquerque."

Echohawk said that the main reason to be involved in a diversity working group at the Laboratory is the networking. This working group has 15 official members but a mailing list of about 150 other interested Laboratory employees.

"You get to meet people at the Laboratory and you have an immediate sense of community, especially when you first start out," he explained. "Then when you've been here a while, it gives you a way to give something back to the community — to provide service. It's nice because you get the benefits of visibility and networking with peers, but you get to contribute as well."



Members of the American Indian Diversity Working Group (left to right): Stefanie Lawson, Chris Echohawk, Barbara Grimes, and Don Clark

Working Together to Overcome Barriers and Increase Involvement

The Deaf Awareness Working Group (DAG) was established to support, act as a resource, and promote activities for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing employees interested in deafness and American Sign Language (ASL). Because ASL is recognized as a linguistically distinct language, the DAG also supports the recognition of deaf employees who use ASL as their primary mode of communication as members of a greater culturally rich and unique community.

"We're trying to ensure the growth of the deaf community at the Laboratory, in terms of recruiting," said Anthony Lucero, a member of the DAG. "We're also striving towards communication access."

Lucero explained through Laboratory interpreter Laura Murphy, that there are five deaf employees at the Laboratory and an equal number of hard-of-hearing employees. Until recently, the DAG had not had access to an interpreter for more than a year.

"Just in the last year, we hired a new interpreter and it's been a tremendous help



Laboratory interpreter, Laura Murphy and Anthony Lucero, a member of the Deaf Awareness Group talk about diversity issues using sign language.

for us. It's nice that we can access an interpreter at a moment's notice," Lucero said.

Murphy is the only Laboratory interpreter but the DAG sometimes contracts with an additional interpreter for meetings.

"We only need one right now for the current population of deaf employees," he said. "Once we recruit more deaf employees, we may be able to hire more interpreters."

One of this diversity group's current initiatives is to help make acquiring a hearing aid less expensive by advocating that insurance cover part of the cost.

Another initiative for this group is recruitment. The DAG currently has a member who

works in the Laboratory's Human Resources (HR) division. This DAG member is striving to educate HR on the best way to recruit deaf people. This group regularly works with the New Mexico School for the Deaf in Santa Fe, but their recruitment efforts are nationwide.

"Our goal is to make sure that the administration understands that a deaf person can work successfully at the Laboratory. We're working on raising awareness and sensitivity to that issue," Lucero said.

Lucero, who is from El Rito, has worked at the Laboratory for 20 years. He currently works in the Occupational Medicine group with medical records.

He also wanted to emphasize that the DAG welcomes all people into their group, not just the hearing impaired.

"This allows the Laboratory community to see what we're about. Regardless of their needs, we want to show that we support them across the board," Lucero said.

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spirit," she said, "Our group can help raise awareness of the contributions women make."

Another contribution of the group is supporting other programs that contribute to women's progress such as Expanding Your Horizons (EYH). The EYH program gives girls in eighth through tenth grades from throughout Northern and Central New Mexico an opportunity to learn more about what a career in science has to offer, she said.

Policy issues are an area where Guffee feels the WDWG can make a significant contribution. She acknowledges a couple of challenges in this area: first, that people aren't aware of policies that already exist such as flextime and job sharing; second, that the policies as they are currently written can sometimes be vague and even contradict each other. WDWG wants to help raise awareness of the policies that already exist and help clarify the expectations of management.

To show that the WDWG really believes in diversity, the group now has a male on board.

"It's working well," she said. "He wanted to join the group because he feels like he has insights into women's issues since he grew up in a close family with his mother and sisters." And, she says, the group members seem to feel comfortable talking around him.

Guffee indicates that she does feel the group has support at the Director's level. "They've responded well to our requests for information," she said. "When we had a question they responded right away — within the day."

A Message From Director John Browne



Laboratory Director John Browne

To Our Friends and Neighbors:

For each of us, there are certain dates with deeply personal meaning – the birth of a loved one, a wedding anniversary, or other significant life event.

There are also certain dates linked to events so powerful that they leave a lasting imprint on society.

For my parent's generation, there were at least two — the stock market collapse on Oct. 29, 1929, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

For my generation, there was the assassination of President Kennedy on November 23, 1963, and the Challenger accident of June 6, 1986. If you were alive and of an age to remember, you can probably recall with great clarity where you were when you learned of these events.

And so it was also for September 11, 2001 — a date that will live in our minds and our hearts as long as we live, marking an event that has likely changed forever the landscape of our world.

Our Laboratory was created to help end World War II — which for the United States began with the attack on Pearl Harbor. The attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon ushered our nation into a new war — this time one against terrorism. We can't predict the path this war will take, but

we do know Los Alamos has a role to help our nation win it.

Such is our vision
– *to serve the nation by developing and applying the best science and technology to make the world a better and safer place.*

Although many people do not realize it, our Laboratory has been working to combat terrorism — especially threats from weapons of mass destruction — for many years. The Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST) was created in 1975 in response to a growing concern over nuclear weapons being developed or stolen by terrorists or rogue countries.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991, we increased our efforts with our Russian and former Soviet republic counterparts to help secure nuclear materials at many of their sites. This has grown to include a second line of defense at airports and harbors.

Reports from Russian immigrants indicated the Soviet Union also had developed a vast biological warfare program. In 1979, the Soviets had a major anthrax outbreak at Sverdlosk, resulting in the deaths of at least 64 people. They attributed it to “tainted meat” eaten by the population. In the early 1990s, Los Alamos scientists performed detailed DNA analyses of tissue samples from the Sverdlosk victims. These analyses showed that the anthrax was “engineered” with at least 4 strains present in the victims, and thus not a natural outbreak. Russia later admitted that Sverdlosk was one of the biological warfare sites. This Los Alamos capability was immediately applied in the wake of the anthrax attacks this fall in Washington, New York, and Florida.

Today we are contributing our technical strengths to the Office of Homeland Security, as well as the Department of

Defense, to address challenges associated with terrorism. The creation of the new Department of Homeland Security will focus this country's efforts to develop short- and long-term solutions for many existing vulnerabilities. In a free society, however, we will never be able to eliminate all risks and we will need to maintain our vigilance.

Our Laboratory's role is to help the nation counter terrorist threats with the best science and technology that we have to offer. But as a nation, we also must address the longer-term core issues that lead people to embrace terrorism. Quality of life for all people will be a major driving force in dealing with the global challenges of the 21st century.

The issues of adequate energy supply, environmental degradation, health, and food supply are coupled as never before in history. “*Making the world a better and safer place*” includes contributing in these areas as well so that we sever the roots of terrorism where we can. Our generation will remember 9/11 as the date when the war on terrorism began. Perhaps the next generation will remember a date when the war ends.



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Student Athlete's Poster Stresses the Value of Teamwork



UNM student and Lab employee Crestina Vigil shows how diversity is all a matter of teamwork.

Crestina Vigil has been a student employee in the Safety Training group of the Lab's Nuclear Materials Technology Division since her junior year in high school. Back then, she was a Pojoaque basketball star who volunteered her scarce free time to help her community. Now a senior and Presidential Scholar at the University of New Mexico, the elementary education major has learned to apply the principles of pride and teamwork that she embraced as an athlete to diversity challenges in the workplace.

Vigil created a poster entitled "Diversity is a Team Sport: The Best Team Players Always Win." The poster highlights New Mexico teams, players, coaches, and parents who have exemplified diversity, teamwork, and community spirit. It was displayed at the recent Diversity Conference in Albuquerque and at the Student Symposium at the Research Park in July. The New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA) will display it at their all-schools meeting in October and is considering giving it a permanent home in its Hall of Champions.



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