



New Mexico AMP CURRENTS October 2007 Conference Issue

Over 370 New Mexico AMP community college and university students, staff, faculty, and administrators, along with representatives from the New York City, Oklahoma, California, Puerto Rico, and Ohio LSAMPs, in addition to high school juniors, seniors, and advisors from the New Mexico Math, Engineering, Science Achievement, Inc. (New Mexico MESA) program, attended the 2007 New Mexico AMP Student Research Conference at New Mexico State University (NMSU) on October 5th.

Dr. Mary O'Connell, NMSU Regents Professor in Plant and Environmental Sciences delivered the Keynote Address. Dr. O'Connell discussed her research of medicinal plants of the Southwest and the role ethics plays in research. She informed the attendees of her research on such plants as the lavender plant, and she shared the learning opportunities that her research has provided students. At the conference luncheon, the Honorable Michael Sanchez, New Mexico Senator, provided important information about his own background as well as his passion for encouraging students to continue their education to completion. This passion is what drove Senator Sanchez to be the lead sponsor of the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship. The Senator also focused on the possibilities for students of diversity, encouraging them to realize their unique potential for success that may eventually lead to contributions to New Mexico's continued growth and welfare. Students particularly enjoyed hearing Senator Sanchez' personal success story, commenting that Senator Sanchez was very "down-to-earth, easy-to-relate-to, and approachable."

Student research presentations took place throughout the day, with 20 oral presentations and 26 poster presentations, including a record number of collaborative team presentations. Sixteen (16) oral presentations and 26 poster presentations competed for awards. The oral presentation winners were the following: 1st Place: Sadot Banuet, Computer Science, California State University-San Bernadino; 2nd Place: Michael Freeman, Mechanical Engineering, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology; 3rd Place: Justin Marcak, Industrial Engineering, NMSU. The poster presentation winners were the following: In a tie for 1st Place: Sandra Jacquez, Industrial Engineering, NMSU and Kojo Wallace, Biology, City University of New York-Bronx Community College (CUNY-Bronx); In a tie for 2nd Place: Christian De Rojas, Mathematics and Financial Engineering tied with team winners: Donna Lopez-Rios, Computer Science, Santa Fe Community College; Michelle Saunders, Computer Science,

NMSU-Grants; and Jessica Palafox, Computer Science, Santa Fe Community College; and 3rd Place: Andrea Chavez, Biology, University of New Mexico.

Students viewed posters and met with NMSU faculty members to discuss their research during the University Research Council (URC) Poster Presentations, then they had the opportunity to attend the New Mexico MESA Paper Tower Competition and the NMSU Information Fair, with assistance from offices of Admissions, Graduate School, Financial Aid, and others. A highlight of the conference was a seminar presented by Dr. Ken White, Academic Department Head of Civil and Geological Engineering and expert bridge consultant. The seminar informed students about the Minneapolis bridge failure and demonstrated with a single truss bridge model constructed of balsa wood how the bridge might have collapsed. Finally, students had the opportunity to attend a seminar presented by Jose Cortes, New York City LSAMP Web Portal Manager, which focused on an innovative system developed for LSAMP programs to facilitate and encourage interactive, collaborative research across STEM disciplines, institutions, and agencies.

A pre-conference workshop was held before the day of the conference to help community college students navigate the conference and make the most of the conference experience. A post-conference workshop the day after the conference targeted transfer issues to make the transition easier for students to move from community college to four-year universities. Thank you to all who attended the conference and to those who gave their all to make the 2007 conference one of the BEST New Mexico AMP has ever had!!

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