

MAR06-2005-000290

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR06 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

An International Perspective on Women in Physics

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The 1st International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) Conference on Women in Physics, held in 2002 in Paris, France, highlighted a number of issues facing women physicists around the world. A second conference was held in May 2005 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the goal of examining the progress made since the last conference and also to provide an opportunity for the delegates to present their research, both physics research and gender-related research, and to make contacts for future collaborations. The conference was attended by 145 delegates from 42 countries, including a very diverse delegation of 22 women and men from the U.S. The conference was organized by the Working Group on Women in Physics of IUPAP, which is charged with making recommendations to IUPAP on how to attract, retain, and increase the participation of women in physics at all levels. The conference included a round table discussion on “Research Funding and Women in Physics,” several plenary talks, a poster session on women in physics in each country, a poster session on research by individual delegates, and discussion groups on six topics including attracting girls into physics, launching a successful career, getting women into leadership, improving the institutional climate, learning from regional differences, and balancing family and career. Conference proceedings have been published that include research abstracts, summaries from the discussion groups, articles on the plenary talks, and papers from each country on the status of women in physics in their country (proceedings can be found at <http://proceedings.aip.org/proceedings/confproceed/795.jsp>). This talk will discuss the U. S. delegation and their country paper on the situation for women in physics in the U.S. as well as highlights from the information presented by the delegates from other nations. The outcomes of the 2002 conference will be described briefly and then the signs of progress noted in 2005 will be summarized.