

HOTLINE

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory is a United States Department of Energy Facility

White Receives Princeton's Presidential Achievement Award

Photo by Denise Applewhite

In special recognition of her commitment to excellence, her exceptional dedication, and her outstanding service over many years to her department and the University, Princeton University recently presented PPPL's Arlene White with the 1999 Presidential Achievement Award. White, a Senior Buyer and Small Business Liaison Officer for the Lab's Procurement Division, is one of four recipients of the award. The honorees were cited during a ceremony at Princeton's Rockefeller College in January.

PPPL Business Operations Head Ed Winkler said, "I have had the pleasure of watching Arlene White continuously develop professionally during the approximately eight years that I have worked with her. The keys to Arlene's success have been her intense desire to constantly improve her capabilities, her incredible enthusiasm and energy, and her uncanny ability to work with people in order to achieve her objectives. In short, Arlene inspires confidence regarding her ability to meet mission objectives and to get the job done. It is indeed a pleasure to work with her."

Added PPPL Procurement Head Rodney Templon, "Arlene's personal dedication to excellence, her professional acumen, her clear vision of what the Laboratory can accomplish in fulfilling its social responsibilities, as well as its research mission, her intense enthusiasm for each task she undertakes, and the consummate interpersonal skills she exercises in her dealings with suppliers



Arlene White receives the Presidential Achievement Award from Princeton University's Robert Durkee on January 27.

and requisitioners, have all contributed to her well-deserved success. She is a distinguished member of our PPPL community."

The award, part of Princeton's Staff Recognition Program, was established in 1997 and is designed to recognize members of the support and administrative

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staff with ten or more years of service who, through their dedication and excellent work, have made a significant contribution to the success of their department and to the University. Four awards are made annually. Nominations are made by managers and their vice presidents or deans. Recipients receive a certificate, a cash award of \$2,000, and have their names inscribed on a plaque displayed in the Office of Human Resources on main campus.

Templon states in a nomination letter, "In the years since Arlene took over the Small Business Program, PPPL has exceeded all expectations. For four successive years — due to Arlene's tireless outreach and sourcing efforts — the Laboratory has exceeded its goals by significant margins." White's leadership in the program since it was created in 1995 led the Lab to being recognized repeatedly during the last few years. In 1998, PPPL received the Award of Distinction from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and in 1999, PPPL garnered the U.S. Department of Energy's Corporate Award for its outstanding small business program and the SBA's Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence in Small Business Subcontracting.

Templon said in addition to her leadership role in the small business program, White is the Lab's primary buyer for off-the-shelf items and fabricated components. "In her sixteen years as a buyer, she has gained the respect and confidence of the Laboratory's engineering and physics communities, who rely on her extensive knowledge of the marketplace to ensure the economical purchase and timely delivery of hard-to-find items," he said.

White, who has been at the Laboratory since 1977, has served as a senior buyer since 1992. In this position, she writes contracts for amounts that are as little as \$11 and as much as half a million dollars and are for goods and services ranging from a fax machine tray and lawn main-

tenance services to cylinder gases and parts for the Lab's newest fusion machine, the National Spherical Torus Experiment (NSTX). Those involved in the construction of NSTX lauded White's accomplishments.

PPPL Engineering and Technical Infrastructure Head Michael Williams said, "Arlene has been an invaluable contributor throughout the procurement process for the NSTX construction activities. Her ability to find vendors for the procurement of nonstandard materials is remarkable and a key to the success of the project. She has been an effective and tough negotiator with all vendors, demanding pricing and delivery that were consistent with the project's needs."

Upon receiving the citation from Princeton University, White said, "This award leaves me breathless when I think of what it means. It was such an honor to be nominated; especially since there are so many capable and worthwhile people to choose from at PPPL. I truly believe in the people here and in the Laboratory's mission. I give special thanks to those of you who believe in me as well." ●

Physicist Gates Visits Lab



On February 10, Professor Sylvester J. Gates, of the University of Maryland, presented a colloquium in the MBG Auditorium about "Einstein's Dream at the End of the Millennium" and led a discussion in the Commons about "Diversity in the Scientific Workforce." Professor Gates' visit, hosted by the Director's Minority Advisory Committee, was in support of Black History Month. A leader in the African-American scientific community, Gates' field of study is theoretical elementary particle physics and quantum field theory, with particular interest in the topic known as "supersymmetry." In the Commons are, from left, Pamela Lucas, Gates, and Andrea Moten.

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DACW Helps Women Prepare for the Future

By Patti Wieser

Take advantage of self-development activities that are available at the Laboratory. Chart your course for retirement. Educate yourself about financial planning. Fill your own personal “suitcase” with skills and knowledge — things no one can take away from you.

These were the messages delivered to women of PPPL during the Director’s Advisory Committee on Women (DACW) Meeting on January 27. About 50 female employees came to the meeting in B-318 for a program about the DACW’s new vision, the Laboratory’s Self Development Program, and financial planning.

PPPL Human Resources Deputy Head Susan Murphy-LaMarche told the group one of the DACW’s goals is to foster the professional and educational development of women at all levels. “Self development is creating a change on purpose. You are the architect of your future,” said Murphy-LaMarche. Each person has a career suitcase that is filled with skills, knowledge, and abilities. This portable carrier accompanies a person even when she leaves. “Someone can take your job away, but not your knowledge, skills, and abilities,” she explained.

Murphy-LaMarche encouraged women to consider where they want to be three, four, or five years from now, and to develop a plan for how to get there. “Don’t wait for it to happen — *make* it happen,” she said.

Joanne Savino, who became the DACW Chairperson for 2000, discussed how she recently completed an



Joanne Savino, the DACW Chairperson for 2000, recounts her experiences with self development to a crowd in B-318 during the Committee’s meeting in January.

office management and technology course as part of her self development at the Laboratory. “PPPL is willing to make an investment in you. Rob [Goldston] wants to make an investment in you. So give it a try. You’ll be a better person,” said Savino.

Also during the meeting, DACW 1999 Chairperson Molly Tompkins discussed the committee’s new vision, mission, and goals; TIAA-CREF Senior Individual Consultant Lisa McGrath urged the attendees to educate themselves about retirement, financial, and estate planning; and PPPL Employment Manager Andrea Moten introduced the new female employees recently hired.

PPPL Director Rob Goldston and PPPL Deputy Director Rich Hawryluk offered their encouragement and support of women at the Lab during opening and closing remarks.

Said Goldston, “Women play a very important role at PPPL. We need to engage women in all activities at the Laboratory.” ●



From left, Sue Hill, Cathy Manfredi, and Cathy Saville get a chance to “network” after the program at the DACW meeting.

At PPPL, there are many ways for employees to develop themselves. Examples are single-session or multiple-session training courses, conferences, books, management training, and computer instruction. For information about self development, please contact Human Resources Deputy Head Susan Murphy-LaMarche at ext. 2224 or e-mail her at smurphy@pppl.gov. An article about the Lab’s Self-development Program was featured in the August, 1999 issue of Hotline (Vol. 20, No. 12).

Just how do you add it up?

Spotlight on Accounting

Need a paycheck? Want to book airline tickets for a business conference or get reimbursed for supplies you picked up on your way to work?

Then PPPL's Accounting Division is the place to go. According to Accounting Head Tony Bleach, his group's primary function is processing travel vouchers, reimbursing PPPL employees, processing payroll costs, and paying outside vendors, as well as providing travel and petty cash services. The division, staffed by 10 with partial support from Cathy Manfredi, who is shared with Procurement and the Business Operations Office, is supported by Princeton University's accounting office on main campus. The University office issues payroll checks and cuts and mails checks for vendors.

The PPPL Accounting staff, which boasts a total of 196 years of service, is situated in the offices across and behind the overlook area to the NSTX Control Room. While distributing paychecks and booking hotel and airline reservations, the accounting employees keep a careful eye on the money, making sure it is spent according to policies established by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). For instance, DOE recently issued new guidelines on travel reimbursement and established budget limits for travel spending. "We have to make sure we comply with these guidelines and make them part of our policies at PPPL," Bleach said.

Another major responsibility of the Accounting Division is reporting financial data to the DOE. Each month, the group submits the Laboratory's cost information to DOE by electronically feeding data into an account with the federal agency.

Accounting practices at the Lab have changed dramatically since the days when everything was entered into ledgers by hand. "A lot has changed because of computers and the implementation of processing improvements," said Bleach. He recalled how the Accounting group at the Lab used to employ close to forty people. Most staff members were lost because of budget cuts. "However, to compensate for the staff reductions, we had to rely on an increased use of computers and efficiency enhancements in processing data," said Bleach.

Electronic Methods

The staff in payroll used to punch in everyone's timesheet and reconcile payroll costs with main campus manually. "We now rely on electronic methods and processing improvements to perform many functions.



The Accounting Group includes, from left (seated), Carol Hirschman, Connie Cummings, Tony Bleach, Cathy Manfredi, and Jo Lumberger; (standing) Madeline McMullen, Letty Wohar, Penny Neuman, and Sally Connell. Not pictured are John Wheeler and Sean Inselberg.

For instance, employees use an electronic timesheet, in accounts payable, we use many 'invoiceless' payments, and we have the purchase card for buying many small-dollar items," said Bleach. "The credit card makes a big difference in consolidating vendor payments and reduces purchase requisition processing."

Other improvements made over the years are the elimination of hard-copy accounting reports, using electronic spreadsheets, and electronically transmitting data between PPPL and Princeton University, such as vendor payment information, PPPL and Princeton University inter-company transactions, and reconciliation data.

Longtime Accounting employees Jo Lumberger and Connie Cummings remembered the tedium of balancing the books for year-end closings when everything was entered by hand. When the work was completed, Accounting staff had cause to celebrate and often held costume soirees with refreshments. "We used to have year-end closing parties and sometimes we had a theme for them and wore costumes. One year we dressed up like cards in a deck of cards," said Lumberger.

While the Division continues to be transformed by personnel turnover and technological advances, one thing remains the same — a careful eye for detail. "Entries into books and records must be accurate," noted Bleach.

Bleach recalled interviewing for his current position, and being asked by Business Operations Head Ed Winkler what he thought the role of an accounting department is within an organization. "I said it is to provide a service and to ensure you have controls in place to protect your assets," Bleach replied.

He added, "That rule still holds. That's what accounting is all about — accurate reporting and compliance." ●