

Annual Conference Report
Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
Dallas, Texas
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Overview of SIO Impact at SACNAS:

The National Science Foundation considers SACNAS the premiere organization for promoting diversity in science careers (<http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/news/02/pr0216.htm>) Over the last 10 years conference attendance has raised by 71% (<http://www.sacnas.org/>) and this year's conference was the most-well attended in the history of SACNAS, which began in 1973. With critical financial support from several organizations (SACNAS, CMBC, NOAA, SIO graduate studies department), SIO students and staff were able to attend the SACNAS 2009 conference and were able to reach the SACNAS community at multiple venues. Perhaps most valuable, SIO offered a platform for graduate school opportunities in marine sciences, otherwise rare or absent at SACNAS. SIO students gave the only oral presentations in marine biology during the graduate student scientific symposia. SIO students also participated in science sessions, panels, and seminars, provided feedback on undergraduate poster presentations, and encouraged interested underrepresented students to pursue their professional goals in science, especially in marine sciences. Information regarding the SIO Ph.D. program, funding opportunities, and preparation tips for graduate school was given by staff. Important strides forward were made at this year's conference and 42 underrepresented students signed up for more information about the SIO PhD program. With more administrative, faculty, and financial support the impact of SIO at the conference can substantially grow.

SIO conference activities:

SIO participants at the 2009 conference were graduate students, Marlene Brito, Damien Cie, Moira Decima, Elisa Maldonado, and Mike Navarro as well as the SIO graduate coordinator, Josh Reeves. SACNAS participants value mentoring opportunities as one of the most valuable opportunities offered at the conference. One student stated, "SACNAS has been like my mentor who always lets me see the potential that I have to become a really outstanding scientist (<http://www.sacnas.org/>)." All the SIO students mentioned above mentored SACNAS participants during the "Conversations with Scientists" session focused on Marine Biology, Marine Biodiversity, Conservation, and Oceanography. SIO students also mentored SACNAS participants during networking meals, and gave feedback to participants on their research during poster sessions. In addition, Elisa and Mike helped to promote professional development by participating on a graduate student panel titled, "Serving our communities through marine science: An ocean of opportunities." Through this session and along with the work conducted by Josh Reeves at the SIO exhibitor table, 42 underrepresented students signed up for more information regarding graduate study at SIO. This effort is vital to the promotion of

diversity in marine sciences because there is a remarkable absence of scientists at the graduate student level and higher.

SIO students provided a large proportion of the research on the topic of marine sciences. Of the 26 sessions in the scientific symposia, only 1 was focused on the marine environment, and it was titled, “Sustainable seas: An interdisciplinary approach to the conservation and management of ocean resources.” During this session four speakers gave talks including Damien’s titled, “From the beach to the broad room: Sustainable management.” All of these invited researchers had earned a PhD except for Damien, who was invited as graduate student. Strikingly, Moira and Elisa contributed the only graduate student talks in the field of Marine Biology:

Decima M, McCormick M, Landry M, Gier E, Popp B (SIO) *Trophic relationships in two plankton specie during and after a major ENSO event in the California Current.*

Maldonado E (SIO) *Swimming stability of sea urchin larvae in fluid shear.*

In sum, SIO students made major efforts to showcase opportunities in marine science careers to underrepresented students at the premier conference for promoting diversity in science careers. Continued annual efforts at SACNAS represent an important step to establishing that the SIO student community is inclusive of all underrepresented groups and values diversity.

Recommendations for 2010 Conference:

- 1) We need to collaborate more with the other departments and create a UCSD/SIO banner and table cover to use during outreach events. Those attending noticed that our table lacked decoration and was hard to locate. We relied completely on the program listing and missed meeting many students. Further, to promote the diversity at SIO, more of a cohesive effort should be made for communication among UCSD groups that value diversity because it’s relatively easy to do and because it demonstrates that UCSD has many organizations striving towards an inclusive community. Specifically, there are several groups from UCSD that regularly attend SACNAS but rarely communicate at any other times. These groups include the SIO graduate office, UCSD graduate office, UCSD SACNAS, and SIO students. In addition, SIO Grassroots Diversity Action Working Group (GDAWG) should be included in communications and perhaps should be encouraged to attend the next SACNAS meeting. If done well, these types of communication could make UCSD stand out from other universities that don’t make this type of effort.
- 2) During the professional development sessions we should not have chairs. Over the last three years Damien Cie has noticed that during these sessions people tend to stay in one place and not network. Damien suggests that if we only had cocktail

tables without chairs networking and disseminating the information would be enhanced.

- 3) To further develop the current efforts at SACNAS, faculty representation is needed. Universities such as California State University, Monterey and Boston College both were able to send faculty that championed diversity in marine sciences. Dr. Corey Garza, CSU Monterey organized and led the scientific symposium titled, “Sustainable seas: An interdisciplinary approach to the conservation and management of ocean resources,” and Dr. Serena Moseman, Boston College, led the professional development symposium titled, “Serving our communities through marine sciences: an ocean of opportunities.” Identifying a faculty member or two that would be willing to organize a session would greatly aid SIO’s efforts. The national conference will be held locally next year, which may aid this effort.