Status of Health Physics Scholarships

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R. Craig Williamson
Director
South Carolina Universities Research and Education Foundation
Status of Federal and Private Support for Health Physics Education in the United States

- The U.S. Department of Energy provides 4 to 5 graduate fellowships a year. Undergraduate scholarships are being provided.
- The Department of Labor (OSHA) has programs at specified universities that support health physics students.
- The Department of Homeland Security has broad-based fellowships, it's unclear if HP students are being supported, but there are no restrictions.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has established a new fellowship/scholarship program small amount of funding 400k and amounts to students 10k a year is minimal. Still unclear as to how many HP students will be supported.
- The Environmental Protection Agency Fellowship program is open to Health Physics applications.
- The National Academy for Nuclear Training (NANT) provides fellowships and scholarships in Health Physics.
Health Physics Scholarships: Assessment of Current Status

- Although there are broad-based Public and Private Scholarship and Fellowships, they generally have minimal funding for health physics. With the exception of DOE and NANT these programs do not directly identify health physics as a targeted discipline.

- Even though the support is broad-based there is a feeling among university administrators and faculty members that health physics education is not being supported by the federal government as it has been supported in the past.

- This lack of support may also be reflected in the decreasing numbers of graduate programs in health physics.
Health Physics Scholarships: What Needs to Happen

- A clearly defined set of criteria for what constitutes a Health Physics BS, MS and PhD program needs to be established and utilized by all funding agencies. These agencies should utilize the criteria established by ABET and HPS for accrediting HP programs.

- An assessment on trends in enrollments and degrees offered by “operational/applied health physics” programs needs to be performed. Current surveys list non-qualifying programs and in some cases count Medical Physics students.

- A workforce assessment measuring the needs for BS, MS and PhDs in Health Physics needs to be conducted. This assessment should include all private and public sector employers.

- Workforce focus groups should be organized through the Health Physics Society. Specific groups for DOE, DOE Contractors, NRC and Nuclear Utilities should be the initial groups established. These groups need to clearly delineate the type of HP needed by skill sets and type of degree. These type of focus groups will be able to advise policy makers on the nature and scope of educational programs.
Health Physics Scholarships: What Should Happen

- DOE and NANT will increase the amount and number of awards provided to health physics students, at all degree levels. However, emphasis should be given to workforce needs.
- DOE will reestablish the Health Physics Faculty Research Award Program.
- EPA, DHS, and OSHA will have dedicated Health Physics Student Awards.