AT&T Labs and Lucent Bell Laboratories Ph.D. Fellowship Programs
1972 - 2002
Program History/Overview

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• 1972 -- Launch of the Cooperative Research Fellowship Program (CRFP) targeted to support under-represented minorities
  • Initiated by African American community at Bell Labs to increase diversity in the R&D organization
  • Provided funding for tuition, fees, books, summer internship mentoring by a Labs technologist, and an academic advisor to support the students in the program
• 1974 -- Launch of the Graduate Research Fellowship Program for Women (GRPW)
  • Developed to address challenges of women pursing advanced degrees in the sciences
  • Provided grants (small annual stipends that could be used for expenses not generally covered by other financial awards) and fellowships as in the CRFP
• No model programs existed--ideas came from Bell Labs program founders, executive sponsors, and mentors
Other Graduate Support Programs During the 1970s

- 1974--National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science (GEM)
- 1978--National Science Foundation Minority Graduate Fellowship Program
- 1980--Ford Foundation Fellowships for Minorities
- GEM, Ford provided funds for graduate study at Master’s level; NSF provided Ph.D. funding support
- None had internship or mentoring components

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Under-represented groups accounted for less than 2% of the Engineering and Physical Science Doctoral Degrees in the 1970’s (NSF 00-237, Appendix B, Table 4-12)

In 1975, Ph.D.s Awarded to students in under-represented minority groups:

- 34 Ph.D.s in Engineering
- 53 Ph.D.s in the Physical Sciences
Cooperative Research Fellowship Program (CRFP)

- In 1972 sought highly qualified under-represented minority students from universities local to the NJ Bell Labs facilities (later HBCUs, HSIs, private and public US universities added)
  - CCNY
  - Columbia
  - NYU
  - Polytechnic
  - Rutgers
  - Stevens
  - Princeton
- Students selected by a committee of Bell Labs technical staff
- Mentor-student match critical; mentor had to be willing to invest in the student’s progress over the full course of Ph.D. studies
- An academic advisor --not on Bell Labs staff --acted as an advocate for students in academic matters with universities
- Internship was required for all students the first summer after the student was selected for the program

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Cooperative Research Fellowship program (CRFP)

- Fellowships were renewable annually provided satisfactory progress was being made towards the Ph.D.
- Fellowship committee reviewed candidate progress each semester
- Mentors were in contact with students throughout the school year and often provided subsequent summer internships for CRFP students
Graduate Research Fellowship Program for Women (GRPW)

- Based on CRFP model, but also provided grants (stipends) as well as fellowships for women
- Stipends (grants) could be used to cover expenses connected with childcare, personal computing hardware and software, visits to other university research labs
- As in CRFP, students were assigned mentors and were required to complete their first summer after undergraduate school as interns at Bell Labs
- Funding support was renewable annually and required satisfactory progress towards the Ph.D.
- Student progress was evaluated on a regular basis and some students were invited for additional summer assignments as in CRFP
CRFP and GRPW Programs-- Student Cohorts Selected Annually

- 1970s- mid 1980s
  - 4-5 students selected for each program annually (CRFP, GRPW)
  - GRPW equally divides awards between grants and fellowships
  - CRFP-- fellowships only provided

- Mid 1980s - 1990s
  - Each program selects up to 10 students annually

- 1996 AT&T Bell Labs split between AT&T and Lucent
  - AT&T Labs creates the AT&T Labs Fellowship Program (ALFP) combining the fellowship program for under-represented minorities and women’s programs; awarding 4 fellowships and 4 grants annually; support provided for up to 6 years
  - Lucent Bell Laboratories continues the CRFP and GRPW as before; provides 6-8 CRFP awards and 5-7 GRPW awards annually

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