

32nd NANO CONGRESS FOR FUTURE ADVANCEMENTS

June 12-13, 2020

Nancy Healy, J Nanomater Mol Nanotechnol, Volume 09

Future advancements - Where will the workforce come from to meet future nanotechnology R&D needs?

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Nanoscale science and engineering has advanced over the last decade at a very rapid pace. NanoCongress 2020 is addressing future advances in nanotechnology over a wide range of nano topics yet one “future area” is minimally addressed at this conference, and missing from most other nano-focused conferences e.g., - the future workforce needed to keep pace with this field’s growth. It has been estimated that by 2020 nanotechnology will need 2 million workers worldwide with another five million in supporting roles. Rocco and Bainbridge (2016) also ask: “What are the most pressing research and education issues? How can we develop a transforming national strategy to enhance individual capabilities and overall societal outcomes?” This presentation will discuss strategies that have been successful in developing a workforce pipeline from K through grad. In the US, the National Science Foundation has funded numerous nanotechnology education programs focusing on developing a nano-enabled workforce and an educated public that supports the safe development of nanotechnologies. This presentation will present examples of successful programs such as our Research Experience for Undergraduates. This program’s participants are part of a longitudinal study spanning back to 1997 and encompassing ~1500 students. Over half of these interns are in nanotechnology related fields and 90% in STEM. Some of these students have participated in a second year international program to develop globally aware researchers. To continue to be successful in creating and maintaining a nano-workforce it will be necessary to have joint efforts of academia, industry, and government.

Biography

From 2004 to 2017 Nancy Healy served as Education Director of the National Nanotechnology Infrastructure Network, National Nanotechnology Coordinated Infrastructure (NNCI) and Southeastern Nanotechnology Infrastructure Corridor. Prior to this, she was a program manager at the S.C. Commission on Higher Education focusing on K-12 science and math K-12 issues. From 1977 to 1994, she held academic positions at the University of South Carolina. She has a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island and M.S. and Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from the University of South Carolina. Currently, she is retired but continuing her work at Georgia Institute of Technology.