

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY—*Advocacy Spotlight*

Issue 1—Jan-Mar 2016

FY16 GRPP Members

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•Elizabeth Bierman,
Chair-elect

•Kaitlyn Bunker

•Liz Buzzard

•Jennifer Cooper

•Linda Freeman

•Betty Irish

•Ashley Pietz

•Paula Stenzler

•Karla Tankersley



Message from GRPP Chair—Jan Williams

Welcome to the first edition of the GRPP newsletter! And a huge “thanks!” to our GRPP committee, who makes it all happen. First, to our chair-elect, Elizabeth Bierman, for always keeping the ball rolling, especially at the beginning of the fiscal year while I was out for surgery. Next, to one of our past chairs and members, Paula Stenzler, for pushing forward to roll out this newsletter to help inform the many SWE members who have an interest in advocacy for SWE through GRPP activities. Kudos also go to Kaitlyn Bunker for her contributions to SWE All Together and this newsletter. And finally to the rest of my outstanding committee members, who ensure continuity, communication, and enthusiasm for this important committee.

Some of you may not know how SWE started down the road of public policy advocacy. Much credit goes to our former CEO Betty Shanahan and SWE Fellow Cathy Pieronek, who is sadly no longer with us. Thanks to the vision, drive, political savvy, and expertise of these women, SWE launched two public policy positions on affirmative action and the potential leverage of Title IX legislation to promote STEM equality in educational settings. Since that landmark moment, and with the continuing momentum contributed by our current CEO Karen Horting, we have expanded SWE’s involvement in public policy to sponsorship of an annual Capitol Hill Day, a continuous professional presence in Washington DC on behalf of SWE, and the availability of several tools to help inform, train, and generally enable our membership on various aspects of advocacy as it relates to public policy. We also recently published a position paper on work-life integration. (Thank you, Karla Tankersley!) We’ve certainly come a long way!

Message from Chair Elect— Elizabeth Bierman

Each year, SWE hosts a Diversity and Inclusion Capitol Hill Day. This year the event will take place March 2-3 in Washington DC. SWE will be joined with 30+ other engineering organizations who see the value for more diversity in STEM. Through this Capitol Hill Day, we are educating Members and staff about how a commitment to attaining a diverse and inclusive U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce would help maintain our competitiveness through innovation. The first day of the event we learn about the current environment on the hill and hear from staff and fellows on the hill who are working to increase diverse representation within STEM. The second day attendees meet with their congressional representatives to share why this subject is important to them and what they can do to support this initiative. SWE’s priority is to lead the STEM and diversity communities to engage SWE members, other professional societies and policy makers on how Title IX and other federal mandates can be applied to STEM fields. The long term goal is to be the STEM gender equity power broker at the federal level.



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Advocacy News from the Director of Advocacy – Mary Perkinson

This is an exciting year for SWE Advocacy. One of the new tools to support Government Relations and Public Policy is the Legislative Action Center located at legislativeaction.swe.org. This resource enables SWE members to connect with legislators on important topics related to STEM and gender equality. The Legislative Action Center is a tool to locate your elected officials by zip code and make an appointment with your legislators while they are in your district. It provides a great deal of other useful information such as offices locations, bio, staff, committees and website locations.

The seventh annual Diversity and Inclusion Drives Innovation in STEM Capitol Hill Day will take place on March 2-3, 2016. For those members who are not able to join us in Washington in March, we will be hosting a webinar in April that will provide a step-by-step guide for contacting and meeting with your representatives when they are in their home districts, so watch for details. SWE will also use the Legislative Action Center to send out action alerts to SWE members advising them to write their members of Congress in support of emergent topics that are important to SWE.

We have launched several new advocacy tools to support our members this year. Watch All Together for the monthly “Why Advocate Series” that features how you can advocate. Starting in February we will start a series of Advocacy Webinars featuring the advocacy work of our members. Advocacy is an important initiative within the society, and we want to make sure that our members have access to the tools and resources that will help them become an effective advocate.

SWE Advocacy Modules 101 and 201 by *Kaitlyn J. Bunker Ph.D.*

A new SWE resource is available in the [Advance Learning Center](#): new eLearning Modules on Advocacy! These modules are free for SWE members, and provide a look into some of SWE's initiatives related to advocacy, which is one of our three strategic goals. SWE Advocacy 101 provides a bit more background on these strategic goals, how the topic of advocacy fits within SWE's overall mission and current programs, and how you can advocate. SWE Advocacy 201 focuses on the SWE Government Relations and Public Policy committee, describing our committee's work and outlining an Advocacy Toolkit, as well as providing tips on how you can communicate with your representatives in Congress. I personally enjoyed both modules because I could click through at my own pace, and click on links for more information on topics that were important to me while getting a great overview of advocacy in SWE. Check out the [SWE Advocacy eLearning Modules](#) to learn more!



Editor in Chief: Paula Stenzler

Assistant Editor:

Karen Horting, SWE CEO

Della Cronin, Washington Representative

Mary Perkinson, Director of Advocacy