

OSA, SPIE and MRS Announce 2010-2011 Congressional Science and Engineering Fellows

WASHINGTON, August 30 —The Optical Society ([OSA](#)), along with co-sponsors [SPIE](#) and the Materials Research Society ([MRS](#)), have selected their 2010-2011 Congressional Science and Engineering Fellows. Marcius Extavour, a Quantitative Risk Analyst at Ontario Power Generation Inc., will serve as the Arthur H. Guenther Congressional Fellow (co-sponsored by OSA and SPIE) and Ashley White, a recent graduate of the University of Cambridge, will serve as the OSA/MRS Congressional Fellow. Extavour and White will each serve one-year terms working as special legislative assistants on the staffs of members of Congress or congressional committees.

Extavour and White will begin the program in early September in Washington, D.C. starting with an intensive orientation facilitated by AAAS for all Congressional and Executive Branch Fellows from more than two dozen scientific societies. Following orientation, the new Fellows will go through an interview and selection process with offices of senators, representatives and committees on Capitol Hill. Offices will extend offers, and Extavour and White will each choose the office in which they will spend their fellowship year.

The purpose of the Congressional Fellowships program is to bring technical and science backgrounds and external perspectives to the decision-making process in Congress. Typically, fellows conduct legislative or oversight work, assist in congressional hearings and debates, prepare briefs and write speeches as a part of their daily responsibilities. By applying their scientific expertise in this policy environment, Extavour and White will help to broaden awareness of the value of scientist- and engineer-government interaction.

Each year, following a formal application process, finalists are interviewed and fellows are selected by committees comprised of volunteer members from OSA, SPIE and MRS. For more information on the selection process, visit [SPIE's Fellows webpage](#) or [OSA's website](#).

About the Guenther and OSA/MRS Fellows

Marcius Extavour most recently worked as a Quantitative Risk Analyst at Ontario Power Generation Inc. There he tackled the unique challenges of management and decision-making at a public utility within one of North America's largest power networks. In this role he worked with engineers, accountants, and risk experts to model the leading operational, financial and strategic risks to the company. Extavour credits this experience in particular with helping him to develop an understanding of the regional and international dynamics of science-related policy and regulation across North America, and with sharpening his interest in science-informed public policy. He received a B.A.Sc. in Engineering Science at the University of Toronto, completing thesis research on new materials for improving solar cell efficiency. Extavour carried out doctoral work in physics in the Quantum Optics cluster at the University of Toronto. His research focused on experiments exploring the fundamental, quantum mechanical dynamics of atomic gases. Extavour hopes to combine his love of science, public outreach, and policy as a Fellow, and looks forward to better understanding the challenges and opportunities for public advocacy of science within the legislative process.

Ashley White earned her Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Cambridge in 2010, as a British Marshall Scholar and NSF Graduate Research Fellow. Her thesis work focused on developing carbon nanotube-reinforced hydroxyapatite bone graft materials with improved mechanical properties.

Following her Ph.D., White did post-doc work at Cambridge on the removal of carbon nanotubes from body tissue using laser irradiation. She received her B.S. in Materials Science and Engineering from Virginia Tech in 2005, along with a B.A. in Music Performance. As an undergraduate, White gained research experience through several Research Experience for Undergraduate programs, DOE internships, work abroad, and at Virginia Tech. An accomplished violinist, she has served as President of the Cambridge Graduate Orchestra, performed with various orchestras and chamber groups, and spent time in Paraguay and Mexico doing research and teaching music to youth orchestras. While her particular policy interests are nanotechnology, education, and immigration, she looks forward to the opportunity to experience first-hand the political process and how science policy is addressed across a broad range of issues during her fellowship tenure.

About OSA

Uniting more than 70,000 professionals from 134 countries, the Optical Society (OSA) brings together the global optics community through its programs and initiatives. Since 1916 OSA has worked to advance the common interests of the field, providing educational resources to the scientists, engineers and business leaders who work in the field by promoting the science of light and the advanced technologies made possible by optics and photonics. OSA publications, events, technical groups and programs foster optics knowledge and scientific collaboration among all those with an interest in optics and photonics. For more information, visit www.osa.org.

About the Materials Research Society

MRS is an international organization of almost 16,000 materials researchers from academia, industry and government, and a recognized leader in promoting the advancement of interdisciplinary materials research to improve the quality of life. MRS members are engaged and enthusiastic professionals hailing from physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and engineering—the full spectrum of materials research. Headquartered in Warrendale, Pennsylvania (USA), MRS membership now spans over 80 countries, with more than 40% of members residing outside the United States. In addition to its communications and publications portfolio, MRS organizes high-quality scientific meetings, attracting over 13,000 attendees annually and facilitating interactions among a wide range of experts from the cutting edge of the global materials community. MRS is also a recognized leader in education outreach and advocacy for scientific research. More information about the Materials Research Society can be found on its Web site, www.mrs.org.

SPIE is the International Society for Optics and Photonics, founded in 1955 to advance light-based technologies. Serving more than 188,000 constituents from 138 countries, the Society advances emerging technologies through interdisciplinary information exchange, continuing education, publications, patent precedent, and career and professional growth. SPIE annually organizes and sponsors approximately 25 major technical forums, exhibitions, and education programs in North America, Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific, and supports scholarships, grants, and other education programs around the world. For more information, visit SPIE.org.