



# KEYSTONE SYMPOSIA

*Connecting the Scientific Community*

## **For Immediate Release**

For More Information, Please Contact:

Andrew D. Robertson, Ph.D.  
Chief Scientific Officer  
Keystone Symposia  
(970) 262-2675  
[andy@keystonesymposia.org](mailto:andy@keystonesymposia.org)

or

Yvonne M. Psaila  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
Keystone Symposia  
(970) 262-2676  
[yvonnep@keystonesymposia.org](mailto:yvonnep@keystonesymposia.org)

## **Keystone Symposia Awarded Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Grant to Fund Diversity Initiatives**

SILVERTHORNE, Colorado – January 15, 2008 – Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology is pleased to report that it has received a two-year grant valued at just over \$200,000 from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to support its diversity initiatives. For 37 years, Keystone Symposia has been internationally recognized for its scientific conferences focused on topics at the leading edge of biomedical research and featuring the world's most respected research scientists. The organization holds approximately 55 scientific meetings each year on a global basis.

African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native-Americans are traditionally underrepresented in the sciences. With this grant, Keystone Symposia aims to increase participation by students and scientists who belong to such minorities among its meeting organizers, speakers, and participants. It will also seek broader representation of these populations on its Board of Directors and Scientific Advisory Board. The latter is a group of approximately 60 scientists from both the academic and corporate worlds who meet semi-annually to discuss meeting topics for the coming years.

Already, Keystone Symposia offers approximately 700 scholarships annually to make its conferences accessible to those who could not otherwise afford to attend. Many of these scholarships are funded by generous grants from government agencies, various foundations and corporate gifts. Keystone Symposia is particularly focused on supporting young scientists by giving them the unique opportunity to interact with leading experts in their fields, who may later become mentors and supervisors. In fact, 30-40% of annual meeting attendees are students, usually at the graduate level, as well as post-doctoral scientists newly embarking on their careers.

According to Andy Robertson, Chief Scientific Officer of Keystone Symposia, “A diversity of individuals translates into a diversity of viewpoints, research topics, and breakthroughs. Since Keystone Symposia’s ultimate mission is to benefit society by serving as a catalyst for scientific advances, opening our meetings to the most diverse possible community affords the greatest chance for relevance and adding value.”

With the funding, Keystone Symposia will fill a new Director of Diversity post whose goal will be to coordinate diversity programs at Keystone Symposia in areas such as student scholarships and identification of highly-qualified minority scientists to serve as speakers and organizers at its meetings. This individual will build further on initiatives already launched in 2007 such as partnering with SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science) and ABRCMS (Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students).

Keystone Symposia CEO Dr. James W. Aiken expressed the Symposia’s gratitude for this valuable assistance. “We greatly appreciate the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which will help us promote and structure our programs for an increasingly wider audience. Many studies have found that mentorship and collaboration are the two most valuable advantages a new scientist can leverage to advance his or her career; striving to provide the Keystone Symposium experience to anyone who might benefit is a critical goal and priority.”

The Keystone Symposia grant was funded as part of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s Education and Careers in Science and Technology program and specifically the Education for Underrepresented Groups initiative. Program Director Ted Greenwood commented that, “It is in the interest of the United States and of the global scientific enterprise that more members of minority groups traditionally underrepresented in American science – African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans – enter science careers and thrive in these careers. Because participation in a Keystone Symposia meeting can help science students succeed and young scientists thrive, it is important that minority individuals be present at and actively participate in these symposia. The Sloan Foundation is pleased to help Keystone Symposia meet its ambitious but appropriate goals to increase participation of underrepresented minorities as symposium attendees, speakers, and organizers.”

### **About Keystone Symposia**

Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, has been holding internationally renowned scientific meetings since 1972 and has been headquartered in Summit County, Colorado since 1990, when the organization left the University of California at Los Angeles. Annually, Keystone Symposia holds more than 50 meetings, involving more than 13,000 scientists from around the world. Most of the meetings are held in the Rocky Mountain U.S. states and Canadian provinces, with a few each year now scheduled for Asia, Africa, and Europe. More information on scholarships available for students can be found at <http://keystonesymposia.org/Students/Scholarships.cfm>.