

WM Symposia WM2010 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 37: International Youth Congress

Co-Chairs: Robert Berry, *Foxfire Scientific (UK)*

Leonel Lagos, *Florida International University (USA)*

Panel Reporter: Robert Berry, *Foxfire Scientific*

Final Panelist were:

1. Corhyn Parr – *President of UGN in UK;*
2. Braden Goddard – *Texas A&M University Graduate Student;*
3. Rosa Ramirez – *DOE Office of Environmental Management;*
4. Collin Donohoue – *Colorado School of Mines Graduate Student – Rickover Fellowship.*

“The Nuclear Renaissance is here” said **Leonel Lagos**. That and the fact that a high percentage of the U.S. Department of Energy and contractor labor force is nearing retirement, makes the industry ripe for young professionals.

Lagos runs the DOE Fellow program at Florida International University and was one of the co-Chairs for the Tuesday morning panel discussion on International Youth Nuclear Congress/Young Professionals. The panel provided a forum for young people to hear about training, development and networking opportunities for young professionals in the nuclear industry.

Corhyn Parr, President of the Young Generation Network (YGN) in the United Kingdom, said that nuclear was off the agenda only five years ago, but “it’s very much on the agenda today.” She talked about the generational gap created in the nuclear industry and the opportunities created by renewed focus on nuclear as an energy source, as well as cleanup activity at Sellafield and other places.

The YGN also hosts tours. Parr is in the beginning stages of planning a trip to cleanup sites in the United States in 2011. This will be the first trip for the group to the United States since they have fewer contacts here.

The YGN is part of the UK’s Nuclear Institute. It has experienced swift growth in the last few years and is now up to 1,200 members. They provide a platform for education and training, professional development and networking, as well as national and international exchange. But their primary focus is on the next generation.

In addition to Parr and the Young Generation Network, **Braden Goddard** of Texas A&M, talked about the World Nuclear University – Summer Institute in Oxford, England. WNY hosts young professionals working in the nuclear industry for an intensive six-week summer program. The purpose is to foster communications and build leadership skills that young professionals can take back to their organizations throughout the world.

They are given problems to solve, take tours of nuclear facilities and hear from senior professionals in the field, such as Hans Blix, former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. At a per person cost of US \$16,000, the program requires corporate support.

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Also part of the panel was **Rosa Ramirez**, who went through the DOE Fellow program at Florida International University and now works for DOE Office of Environmental Management. She said it's important to young professionals to find a mentor.

In response to Ramirez's comment, an audience member asked the panel what makes a good mentor.

- Find one who is willing to spend some time with you, to get to know you, understand what it is you're interested in.
- Find one you're not afraid to speak to, someone who's been where you are.
- If one isn't working out, find another. It has to work for both of you. A good one will realize they can learn as much from you as you can from them.
- Realize that you may change mentors depending on where you're located and what stage you're in with career and life.
- Don't expect your mentor to do all the work. You have to show some initiative.

They can't read your mind, so talk to them and be open about your goals, your plans, and your thoughts.