



SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS

An organization of the American Institute of Physics

Marsh W. White Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	A Night of Astronomy at Sugarloaf Ridge
Name of School	Sonoma State University
SPS Chapter Number	6474
Total Amount Requested	\$300.00

Abstract

The Sonoma State University chapter would like to host a fun and educational camping trip under the stars for students from nearby junior colleges. The purpose is to build relationships with and promote interest in physics among other scientifically-minded students in the area. This event will feature viewing time on an optical telescope and presentations by local professionals about physics and astronomy.



Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Project/Activity/Event

- Sonoma State University's Society of Physics Students propose to host a group of local junior college students on an educational camping trip to the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park campsite and observatory to encourage interest in pursuing careers in the physical sciences
- We plan to feature one or more speakers discuss their own research and/or interesting topics in physics and astronomy in a casual and welcoming environment.
- SSU SPS members will provide transportation to the campground for those students who require it and will provide complimentary meals during the trip. Our goal is to offer an easy weekend getaway, not "another school project" to the junior college students.
- We expect up to 30 students from the Santa Rosa Junior College and other nearby junior colleges to participate in this event. Additionally, 10-20 physics students from Sonoma State University will attend and help organize the event.
- Our idea is inspired by the Sonoma State University math club, who hold an annual trip to Sugarloaf Ridge S.P. with presentations about local mathematicians' research and job experiences.

How Proposed Activity Promotes Interest in Physics

This project will help promote interest in physics by exposing junior college students to the strong sense of community in our own department and by presenting important contemporary research in a casual environment. We hope to demonstrate that mutual interest in physics can engender strong personal connections leading to fruitful scientific collaboration as well as personal fulfillment. Our goals are to host a fun and educational event that will create bonds between like-minded people in our community, promote vigorous and enthusiastic conversations about physics between undergraduates, and generally illuminate the "fun side" of a career in physics.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project/Activity/Event

- Monthly planning meetings will be held between October 2014 and April 2015. Dr. Hongtao Shi will advise club members and ensure progress is being made.
- SPS members will visit physics and astronomy classes at nearby junior colleges and universities to promote the event. Students will be encouraged to join a mailing list and flyers will be posted.
- Wes Watson will organize monthly planning meetings. Aman Gill and Stephanie Church will reach out to potential speakers. Anna McCowan will develop a budget and manage the campsite reservation. Demitri Call and Aaron Owen will plan, purchase, and cook meals for the trip. These and other SPS members will provide transportation for students from other colleges.
- Aaron Owen, Aman Gill, and Stephanie Church have experience as docents at the SSU observatory. Aman Gill assists Dr. Scott Severson in planning the "What Physicists Do" lecture series at SSU, which features talks by professionals from all branches of physics about their research and careers.



Project/Activity/Event Timeline

Date	Goal
May 31, 2015	Submit final report on the event
April 23, 2015	Compile surveys and feedback
April 17, 2015	Host the event at Sugarloaf Ridge SP
April 13, 2015	Send out final email reminder to students
March 20, 2015	Talk to classes/hang fliers at SRJC
Nov 1, 2014	Make reservation for camping/observatory

Activity Evaluation Plan

- We plan to quantify the success of the event by attendance numbers and the consensus of a brief follow-up survey.
- A few participants will be asked for statements about what they learned from the speakers, how well the event was organized, what they intend to do after completing junior college, and if the event had an impact on their plans.
- The planning committee will hold at least one meeting after the event with the purpose of discussing its execution and whether our goals were met.

Budget Justification

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is home to the Robert Ferguson Observatory as well as a large group campground. It is an ideal location to host our event, because it is located within reasonable driving distance of all schools we plan to involve, its campsite is large enough to host the largest group we could expect to attend, and its three optical telescopes will provide an excellent chance for students to view celestial bodies and discuss interesting topics in astronomy.