



SIGMA PI SIGMA

The physics honor society

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	The Return of Key #26 to the Alpha Chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma
Name of School	Davidson College
Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Number	001
Total Amount Requested	\$500

Abstract

This past April, the 26th Sigma Pi Sigma key, awarded to William Mebane in 1923 at Davidson College, was found and returned. The Davidson Chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma seeks funding to expand our spring Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony to include alumni participation and the return of this key.

Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Project

At the end of every spring semester, our Chapter hosts a Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony followed by a picnic for the entire department at the home of one of the faculty members. We like to joke about our Chapter being special because we were the first Sigma Pi Sigma chapter, but recently we have become aware of a really cool opportunity to incorporate some of our Chapter's history into our current operations. We learned this past year that an old Sigma Pi Sigma key was returned to the SPS national office that had been found lost in the woods. It was discovered that the key belonged to a former math professor at Davidson College, the 26th member of the Davidson Chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma, and therefore the 26th member of Sigma Pi Sigma. Since then, various members of SPS national office have been in contact with the grandson of the original key holder. The grandson, Mr. William Mebane IV, is willing to return the key to Davidson College and we would like to incorporate the official return of the key into our Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony.

We propose to invite all of the Davidson Sigma Pi Sigma alumni that live within driving distance to come to the ceremony to be held sometime in April of 2014. Depending on the number of alumni planning to attend, we hope to be able to have a brief panel of alumni to answer questions that our students have about the different career pathways available to physics majors. This panel would be followed by a brief ceremony in which the key is officially returned to the college. This would be followed by our induction ceremony.

In addition to inviting Davidson Sigma Pi Sigma alumni, we will invite Dr. Toni Sauncy and Mr. William Mebane IV to be a part of this ceremony (Note: both have already informally expressed an interest in participating). In that way, the ceremony and following picnic will be not only a celebration of the achievements of our physics majors, but also a chance to reconnect with alumni, learn about alternative career pathways, connect with SPS national, and continue to enrich the unique historical aspect of Davidson's Sigma Pi Sigma chapter. The panel, ceremony, and picnic will be open to all student and faculty members of the physics department. This is always an excellent opportunity for bonding, especially between upperclassmen and underclassmen who wouldn't normally have classes together.

How Proposed Project Meets the Purpose of the Award

If we are able to incorporate the return of the key into our induction ceremony, we would like to write an article to be published in either our school's newspaper (the *Davidsonian*), or in the *Davidson Journal*. Both of these publications are read not only by students, staff, and faculty, but also by parents of students and by many members of the town of Davidson. In this way, we will reach a wide audience with the story of the founding of Sigma Pi Sigma at Davidson as well as the story of the return, decades later, of the lost key of a member of our Chapter. We would also like to be able to write a follow up article to the article being published in *Radiations* about the key in which we will explain what finally happened to the key.

In addition to raising awareness in the wider Davidson community about Sigma Pi Sigma in general and our Chapter in particular, we also hope that getting to talk with many of our Sigma Pi Sigma alumni and getting to hear about all of the cool things they are doing will inspire more underclassmen to work toward being inducted into the prestigious honor society. We do not have many Sigma Pi Sigma specific events (most of our events are Society of Physics Students events) so this would also be a nice way to shake things up and let members of the Davidson community know that our chapter has historical significance and that our alumni continue the Davidson tradition of breaking new ground while remaining tied to our past.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project

The project will be led by the following:

- Officers of Davidson's Chapter of the Society of Physics Students (who are each members of Sigma Pi Sigma)
 - Jessie Barrick '14
 - Ashley Finger '14
 - Chris Trennepohl '14
 - Phillip Wall '14
- The SPS Chapter Advisor
 - Dr. Mario Belloni
- The Physics Department Chair
 - Dr. Wolfgang Christian
- Sigma Pi Sigma Faculty Advisor
 - Dr. Larry Cain

There will be constant communication among personnel to check progress and checkpoints for the project. The students will be in charge of organizing general logistics of the event such as contacting and inviting Sigma Pi Sigma and other alumni, arranging transportation and housing for special guests, and local advertising. We have already made contact with the key owner's grandson who expressed enthusiastic support of the idea. In addition, we have begun a dialogue with the alumni relations office for the purpose of contacting Sigma Pi Sigma and other alumni about the event. The faculty will provide support for the students and be in charge of the planning of the picnic and the execution of the ceremony. The picnic is an annual tradition of the physics department that requires catering and arranging transportation to the picnic.

Marketing will be initiated by emailing within the physics department and members of the Society of Physics Students. There will be either paper or electronic flyers distributed. Also, social media will be utilized through the Davidson College Physics Students Facebook page.

All members of Sigma Pi Sigma will be expected to participate. Also, most of the physics majors and minors will also be expected to participate along with interested members of the Society of Physics Students. Overall, there will be Sigma Pi Sigma members comprising of 10-15 students, 6 faculty, 20-30 alumni, and 20-30 non-Sigma Pi Sigma alumni.

Project Timeline

Projected Timeline:

- November – December
 - Contact alumni relations for a list of potential alumni to invite to the event.
 - Contact Dr. Cain and Dr. Christian about combining the Key ceremony with the induction ceremony and the physics picnic afterwards.
 - Contact grandson of key owner for approval of idea and to gauge interest in attending.
- January
 - Determine the date of the event - projected for mid April to early May.
 - Contact special guests to see if they will be able to attend. If so, begin to arrange transportation and housing for these guests.
 - Officially compile a list of Sigma Pi Sigma and general alumni to invite to the event. Invite those on the list requesting a RSVP.
 - Notify professors of the date of the event. This is to provide them with ample time to plan their courses (i.e. homework, final projects, or exams) around this date so that physics majors will be free to attend the ceremony and picnic.

- February:
 - Evaluate number of RSVPs received. Send out reminder email if necessary.
 - Finalize transportation and housing for special guests.
 - Obtain a final budget from the department for ceremony and picnic food.
 - Discuss the possibility of having an event-themed T-shirt sponsored by the Society of Physics Students
 - General planning for the event:
 - Discuss the possibility of an alumni panel at the induction ceremony to hear what people are doing or have done with a Davidson physics degree.
 - Overall timing of the afternoon, determine: How long will ceremony be? When should people meet at Dr. Christian's farm for the picnic? How long should people expect to be at the picnic?
 - Discuss details of the ceremony and the picnic i.e. prepare some fun activities to do at the picnic – games, ice breakers, etc.
- March – Mid April:
 - Finalize list of alumni RSVPs, send out confirmation emails.
 - Advertise locally from within the department – electronic flyers, email Sigma Pi Sigma members, Society of Physics Students members, and faculty to formally notify and invite them to the ceremony and picnic. Ask for RSVPs as well for catering purposes.
 - Arrange necessary catering for the picnic.
 - Finalize details of the ceremony and activities at the picnic.
 - Create a T-shirt commemorating the event, finalize design and email Sigma Pi Sigma and Society of Physics members for numbers of T-shirts to order.
- Event Date – Mid April to Early May: Sigma Pi Sigma Induction/Key Ceremony and Annual Physics Department Picnic

Project Evaluation Plan

Invitations will be sent out at least two months in advance to all Davidson College Sigma Pi Sigma members by e-mail and/or letter, with RSVPs requested by all planned-attendees. Special care will be taken for planned speakers and key personnel. An initial list of RSVPs will be documented.

Attendance records will be administered by the SPS officers at both of the banquet locations: the key ceremony at the Baker-Watt Science Complex, and then again at the Christian family farm. This will consist of a sign-in sheet at the entrance overseen by a student.

While care will be taken to survey everyone, a follow-up letter and e-mail will also be sent to ensure that all in attendance have an opportunity to give feedback. Sample questions may include...

1. What made you decide to come to this Sigma Pi Sigma event?
2. Have you come to Sigma Pi Sigma events in the past?
3. Do you plan to come to future Sigma Pi Sigma events at Davidson College or elsewhere?
4. What did you find gratifying at this event?
5. What would you change about this event?

An article will also be written by SPS officers and submitted for publication in the *Davidsonian* and the *Davidson Journal*.

Budget Justification

The budget will be used towards the transportation and hotel accommodations for the grandson of the key's owner and the Director of the Society of Physics Students. The rest of the costs will be funded by the Davidson College Physics Department. The main goal of this event is to introduce a historical element to the spring Sigma Pi Sigma induction of the alpha chapter of the organization. Having the grandson of the key's owner and the Director of the Society of Physics Students present is vital to the story of the key and the ceremonial returning of the key to Davidson College. This funding will go directly towards adding greater distinction and recognition to our induction ceremony. Only through having the grandson of the key owner and the Director of the Society of Physics Students here can we successfully engage our Sigma Pi Sigma chapter and the greater Davidson community in this story so deeply connected to our history. The remainder of the event will be covered with departmental funding, as the returning of the key ceremony will coincide with already established departmental events: the Sigma Pi Sigma induction and the annual department picnic. The department will be able to acquire additional funding for these two events to cover the costs for the expected increase in attendance due to alumni and our honorary guests.