



SIGMA PI SIGMA

The physics honor society

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	Honoring Dr. Robert W. Finkel's Over 40 Years of Physics Career
Name of School	St. John's University, Jamaica, NY
Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Number	303
Total Amount Requested	\$500.00

Abstract

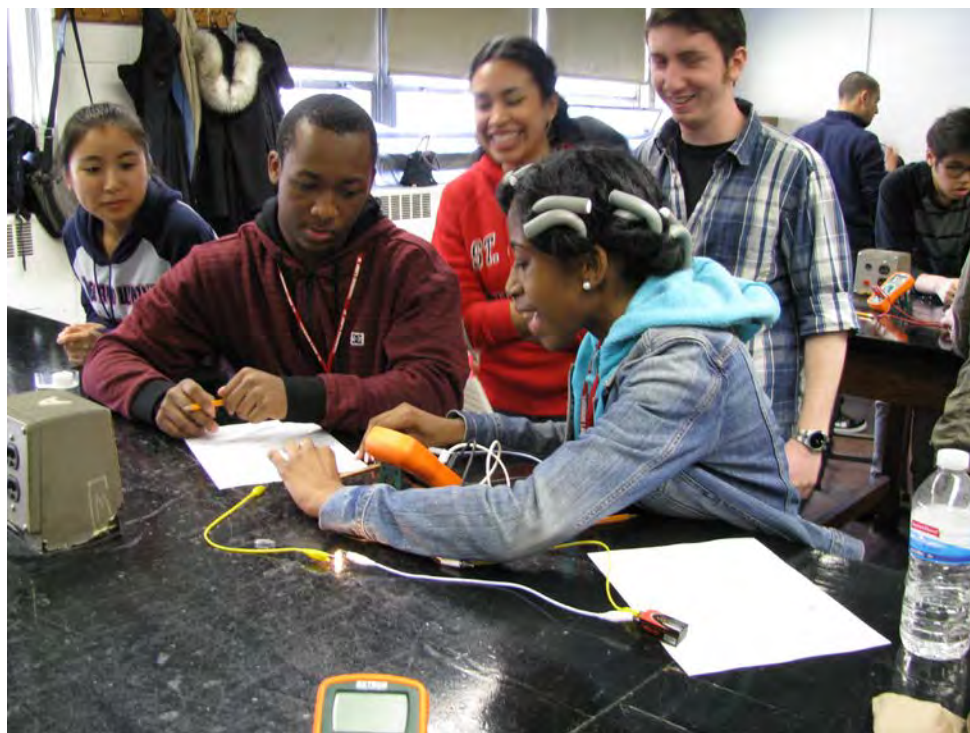
The St. John's University chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma plans to host its 2015 induction ceremony by inviting St. John's University physics alumni, current students and faculty, and local high school students to celebrate the achievements of our students and alumni and honor over 40 years of service of Dr. Robert W. Finkel, Professor and Chair Emeritus of the St. John's University Physics Department, who retired in 2010. The ceremony will start with a Physics Jeopardy contest between 3-5 teams, with each team formed by a mix of students, alumni and faculty. Following the contest, new members will be honored and inducted to Sigma Pi Sigma. The main part of the ceremony is for our alumni to share their stories of interaction with Dr. Finkel when studying at St. John's, and their career development from a physics student to a member of society making contributions in various fields. By inviting local high school students to the event, the ceremony will foster interaction between students, alumni, and local communities and inspire St. John's students as well as local high school students to pursue careers in science and engineering fields. The award will be used to cover expenses for the Jeopardy contest prizes, souvenirs for alumni, and the ceremony dinner.

Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Project

The Society of Physics Students (SPS) Chapter at St. John's University, a primarily undergraduate institution, has become a vibrant student organization in the past five years as a result of the strong efforts by its members. The Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter was also recently revived and has inducted a total of 47 fine physics undergraduates in the past five years. In addition to encouraging the study of physics and honoring those with outstanding academic achievements, our SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma chapters have also engaged in a variety of activities to assist St. John's students of various majors with their physics courses and to promote a science and engineering education among the local community.

Our SPS chapter has been organizing a series of events and physics seminars each semester to promote fellowship among students, foster interaction between students and faculty, and encourage undergraduate research. For example, on November 6th of 2014, St. John's SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma chapters co-organized the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Minds Science Banquet to promote undergraduate research on campus. We are also committed to promoting education of science and engineering among the general public by participating in various outreach activities. Teaming with St. John's Science & Technology Entry Program (STEP), St. John's SPS chapter has been conducting a total of 10 physics workshops for the students in the STEP program since fall 2009. During these workshops, students from local middle and high schools gain hands-on experience by performing experiments adapted from our College Physics lab class. The workshops were well received by the high school students as reflected by their positive responses on their feedback forms. Working with St. John's Academic Service Learning (ASL) program, St. John's SPS chapter also goes to local high schools and communities to give workshops to stimulate our younger generation's interest in science.



Members of St. John's SPS chapter were assisting middle and high school students in the STEP program at the "Electrical Circuits and Ohm's Law" Workshop on April 26, 2014.

With the generous support of the Sigma Pi Sigma national office and the St. John's University, St. John's Sigma Pi Sigma chapter has successfully hosted five induction ceremonies from 2010 to 2014, honoring the outstanding achievements of our students and alumni. All events were well received by the students and their families and friends, invited guest speakers, and faculty and staff. Students were especially interested in networking with alumni and asked them for career advice.

At this year's Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony, we would like to bring alumni, current students and faculty together to celebrate the incredible achievements made by Dr. Robert W. Finkel during his over 40 years of physics career. As Professor and Chairman of the Physics Department for nearly thirty years, Dr. Finkel has won numerous awards for teaching and research, and is well respected by his students. He has a broad research interest in many fields including theoretical physics, biophysics, and statistical physics. He is also the author of popular books such as "The New Brain Booster" and "Concise Introduction to Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics". By inviting a dozen of alumni to the event and asking them to share their stories of interaction with Dr. Finkel and their career success, we would like to celebrate the incredible career of Dr. Finkel as well as the outstanding achievements of St. John's physics alumni, and inspire the current students and local high school students to pursue careers in science and engineering fields.

The Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony and the dinner banquet following the ceremony will be held in the evening of April 8th, 2015. About 15-20 physics alumni and their family members, 15-20 Sigma Pi Sigma members including new inductees and their guests, and 10-15 students and faculty members from all science departments of the St. John's University are expected to attend the event. In addition, we will invite 7-8 local high school students plus their parents to the ceremony. A total of 60 attendees are thus expected at the ceremony.

The event will start with a Physics Jeopardy contest where teams will compete in answering questions ranging from physics knowledge to history of SPS, Sigma Pi Sigma, and the Physics Department of St. John's University. We expect the contest should bring a lot of fun to the event, especially with the participation of alumni and high school kids. The formal ceremony will be opened by the Chair of the Physics Department, followed by induction of the new Sigma Pi Sigma members. The main part of the ceremony is for our alumni to share with the audience their stories of interaction with Dr. Finkel as a physics student at St. John's, and their career development from a physics student to a member of society making contributions in various fields. At the end of the ceremony, we will ask Dr. Finkel to say a few words and inspire the younger generation with his wisdom and humor.

We expect the event will promote students' interest in physics, provide opportunities for students and faculty, alumni, and the local communities to interact with each other, and inspire the younger generation to become tomorrow's leaders in science and engineering fields.

How Proposed Project Meets the Purpose of the Award

- Since 15-20 alumni and their family members are expected to attend the event and interact with our students and local high schools, the event will build community among alumni, new and current Sigma Pi Sigma members, and local high school students.
- We expect to induct 7-8 new members into Sigma Pi Sigma, bringing the total number of inductees in the past six years to about 55.
- By inviting local high school students and their parents to our Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony, it will raise the awareness of Sigma Pi Sigma in the local community and promote the study of science among the younger generation.
- Our SPS chapter has been named one of the outstanding chapters by the SPS national office for two consecutive years. We will celebrate these achievements at the event and also make our SPS chapter more visible to the community.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project

- Personnel planning and organizing the event:
SPS President: Justin Perkins-Ollila
SPS Vice-President: Orlando Lopez
SPS Secretary: Shadab Hassan
SPS Treasurer: Thomas Campbell
SPS Public Relations: Shafat Choudhury
The team will be assisted by Ms. Mary Ann Frohnoefer, secretary of the Department of Physics and Dr. Huizhong Xu, faculty advisor of SPS.
- Marketing
Invitation letters will be sent to alumni and local high school students. Emails will be sent to current students and faculty of St. John's University to invite them to the event. Event flyers will be made and posted on the St. John's University Website and on bulletin boards at various places on campus.
- Sigma Pi Sigma member participation
We expect to induct about 7-8 new members into Sigma Pi Sigma at the ceremony. About five to six current Sigma Pi Sigma members are also expected to attend the event. In addition, 10-15 students and faculty members from all science departments of the St. John's University are expected to attend the event.

Project Timeline

April 8, 2015	St. John's University 2015 Sigma Pi Sigma Induction Ceremony
April 1, 2015	Prizes for the physics jeopardy contest, and souvenirs for alumni prepared, and banquet items ordered
March 31, 2015	Deadline for alumni, high school students and guests, current students and faculty to confirm attendance
March 9, 2015	Invitations sent out to current students and faculty
March 9, 2015	New inductees' information sent to the Sigma Pi Sigma national office and reception items ordered
March 2, 2015	Deadline for inductees to reply to invitation
February 15, 2015	Invitations sent out to new inductees
February 1-15, 2015	New inductees selected by committee
January-February, 2015	Invitations sent out to alumni and local high school students

Project Evaluation Plan

The project will be evaluated in the following aspects. The number of participants will be recorded by asking attendees to sign in at the event and this number will be compared with our expected number of 60 participants. A post-event survey will be conducted to get feedback from the participants. Suggestions and feedback will also be sought by speaking with current students and faculty directly after the event.

Budget Justification

We will use the award to cover expenses for prizes of the Physics Jeopardy contest and the dinner banquet. The remainder cost of the dinner banquet and other necessary expenses on items such as invitations and decorations will be covered by solicited contributions from the St. John's University.

The Physics Jeopardy contest will bring a lot of fun to the event. It will require students to apply physics knowledge in conjunction with teamwork to answer various physics related questions. We had this contest at the 2012 induction ceremony and it was a huge success. We expect participants will be excited about this contest especially given the participation of alumni and high school students.

The dinner banquet will provide all participants of the event opportunities to network with each other and bring our alumni, students and faculty, and local communities closer, spark friendly and productive communications, and promote fellowship among them. These friendly conversations will inspire our students and local high school students to pursue careers in science and engineering and become tomorrow's leaders in their respective fields!