



2017-2018

SPS & Sigma Pi Sigma

INFORMATION HANDBOOK



OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

AIP | American Institute of Physics

The American Institute of Physics is a federation of scientific societies in the physical sciences, representing scientists, engineers, educators, and students. AIP offers authoritative information, services, and expertise in physics education and student programs, science communication, government relations, career services, statistical research in physics employment and education, industrial outreach, and history of the physical sciences. AIP publishes *Physics Today*, the most closely followed magazine of the physical sciences community, and is also home to the Society of Physics Students and the Niels Bohr Library and Archives. AIP owns AIP Publishing LLC, a scholarly publisher in the physical and related sciences. www.aip.org

AIP Member Societies:

American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Astronomical Society
American Crystallographic Association
American Meteorological Society
American Physical Society
Acoustical Society of America
AVS: Science & Technology of Materials, Interfaces,
and Processing
The Optical Society
The Society of Rheology

Other Member Organizations:

Sigma Pi Sigma, the physics honor society
Society of Physics Students
Corporate Associates

Need to Contact SPS?

General questions:

301-209-3007 or sps@aip.org

Awards, Scholarship, Outreach, Internship:

sps-programs@aip.org

Dues, Membership, and Meetings:

sps-membership@aip.org

Sigma Pi Sigma :

sigmapisigma@aip.org

Our phones are staffed from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Eastern time

The Society of Physics Students & Sigma Pi Sigma

American Institute of Physics

1 Physics Ellipse • College Park, MD 20740 • Tel: +1 301-209-3007

sps@aip.org | www.spsnational.org | www.sigmapisigma.org



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Everything in this handbook is available online:
www.spsnational.org/about/governance/sps-information-handbook

Forward: The Society of Physics Students and Sigma Pi Sigma

Overview of Society of Physics Students (SPS)



The Society of Physics Students (SPS) is a professional association explicitly designed for students and their advisors. Membership, through collegiate chapters, is open to anyone interested in physics and astronomy. The only requirement for membership is that you be interested in physics. Besides physics and astronomy majors, our members include majors in chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, medicine, and many other fields. All are welcome in SPS.

At its core, SPS is a grassroots, non-profit structured as a chapter-based membership organization. With over 810 chapters located at colleges and universities across the United States and the world, SPS strives to provide support to all undergraduates with an interest in physics and astronomy. SPS seeks to be inclusive and supportive of the entire community.

Within SPS is housed Sigma Pi Sigma, the national physics honor society, which elects members on the basis of outstanding academic achievement. This unique two-in-one society operates within and is underwritten by the American Institute of Physics, an umbrella organization for other professional science societies.

SPS: Purpose and Mission

SPS is a chapter-based society that exists to help students transform themselves into contributing members of the professional community. Traditional coursework develops one range of skills. Other skills needed to flourish professionally include effective communication and interpersonal networking, leadership, the ability to establish and maintain a personal network of contacts, effective presentation of scholarly work in professional meetings and journals, research, and sharing science with the campus and local communities via outreach. Through its members, advisors, chapters, and leadership, SPS fosters national initiatives and local impacts within the community.

Participating in SPS offers students the opportunity to enrich their college experience. An active SPS chapter serves as a vehicle for strengthening department community, promoting cohesion, and providing professional development opportunities that courses alone cannot provide. A dynamic SPS chapter can also be the most effective recruitment and retention tool for departments and programs. Involving students in an SPS chapter can be influential in transforming them from course-takers into contributing members of a professional community. SPS connects students to a global professional community of individuals interested in the physical science fields.

The Society of Physics Students was formed in 1968 with a constitution that combined its two parent organizations, the AIP Student Sections and the Sigma Pi Sigma honor society. SPS now has over 810 chapters on campuses across the country. The associated honor society, Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ), has over 575 chapters of its own, with over 95,000 inductees throughout its history.

Overview of Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ)



Founded in 1921 at Davidson College (NC), Sigma Pi Sigma is the physics honor society housed within SPS. Induction into Sigma Pi Sigma is earned by outstanding academic achievement in physics and lasts for a lifetime. Sigma Pi Sigma alumni represent a wide diversity of career paths, but all members share in common a record of accomplishment in physics. Sigma Pi Sigma is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies.

Sigma Pi Sigma: Mission

Sigma Pi Sigma exists to honor outstanding scholarships in physics; to encourage interest in physics among all students; to promote an attitude of service among its members toward their fellow students, colleagues, and the public; and to provide a fellowship of persons who have excelled in physics.

The Sigma Pi Sigma Mission Statement was adopted by the SPS National Council on September 30, 1995 and answers the question, "Since membership in Sigma Pi Sigma is for a lifetime, what does membership in Sigma Pi Sigma mean long after the induction ceremony is over?"

TO LEARN MORE

Online

Explore the SPS website: www.spsnational.org

Explore the ΣΠΣ website: www.sigmapisigma.org

Follow SPS on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+

Find SPS social networking links at <http://bit.ly/spssocialmedia>.

Contact SPS

Society of Physics Students
1 Physics Ellipse,
College Park, MD 20740

E-mail: sps@aip.org
Tel: +1 301-209-3007

Interested in starting a new chapter?

Learn more at

<https://www.spsnational.org/about/governance/chapters/starting-new-chapter>

Part I: Connect to SPS National

Governance of SPS & Sigma Pi Sigma

SPS is a chapter-based organization, with the chapters organized into 18 geographic zones nationally and internationally. At its core, SPS is an organization for all students of physics and astronomy and is a partnership between students and faculty. SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma are governed by the SPS constitution and bylaws which can be found online at www.spsnational.org/about/governance/constitution

The SPS Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has the administrative, supervisory, and fiscal responsibility for the operations of the Society of Physics Students and approves all policies of the Society of Physics Students before they are implemented. The Executive Committee is led by the SPS president and the Sigma Pi Sigma president (both elected for two-year terms, limited to two consecutive terms), with an elected Associate Zone Councilor (AZC) representative, the CEO of AIP, an at-large member appointed by the AIP CEO, the SPS director, and the SPS & Sigma Pi Sigma historian. This committee oversees the work of the SPS National Council, provides guidance and advice to SPS National, and acts to ensure the health and progress of the organization.

2017-18 SPS Executive Committee

SPS President

Alina Gearba-Sell

United States Air Force Academy
mirela.gearba@usafa.edu

SPS Director

Brad R. Conrad

American Institute of Physics
bconrad@aip.org

Sigma Pi Sigma President

Willie S. Rockward

Morehouse College
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AIP At-Large Member

Katherine Zaunbrecher

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AZC Student Representative

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Historian

Earl Blodgett

University of Wisconsin – River Falls
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AIP Interim co-CEO

Catherine O’Riordan

American Institute of Physics
coriordan@aip.org



ABOVE: The 2016-17 SPS National Council poses during their annual council meeting.

Part I: Connect to SPS National

The SPS National Council

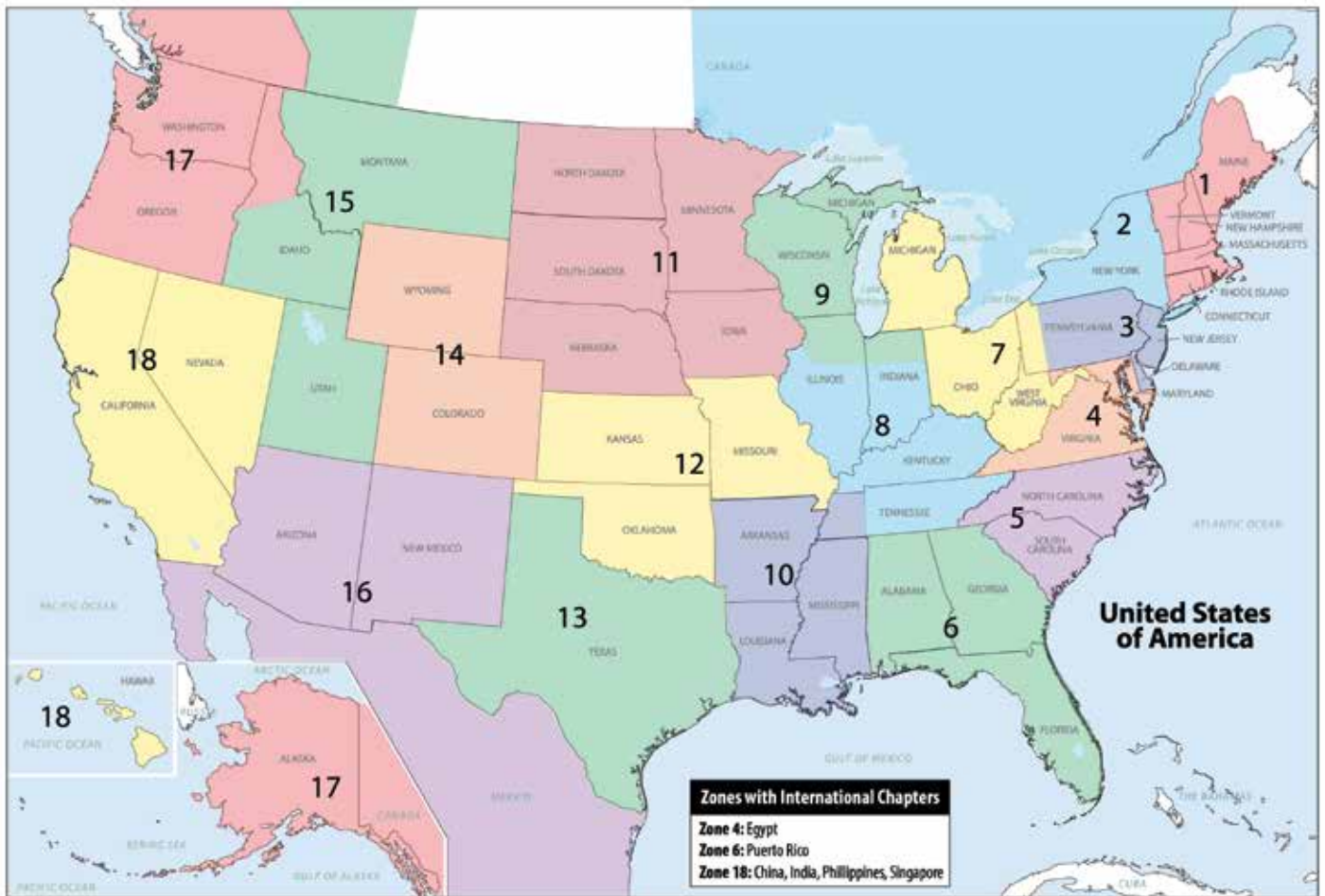
The SPS National Council is the governing body for SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma. The council is comprised of an elected faculty zone councilor (ZC) and an elected student associate zone councilor (AZC) from each of the 18 zones, an elected SPS council president, and an elected Sigma Pi Sigma president. The council composition was designed carefully with students in mind, as SPS is a community of students and faculty mentors.

Elections occur during spring each year. AZCs are elected annually from each zone. ZCs are on a three-year election cycle. Elective officers may not serve more than two consecutive full terms on the Council in the same office. Each councilor speaks for all of the SPS chapters and members within their zone on matters of national importance. For more information about how to become part of the National Council or about the election process, visit www.spsnational.org/about/governance/national-council/nominations/elections.

Additionally, the SPS National Council is charged with evaluating, planning, and driving forward the initiatives of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma. A bulk of the work done by the National Council is accomplished through committees, which are composed of ZCs, AZCs, SPS National Office members, and invited members. The entire council meets several times each academic year to address society needs, initiatives, and endeavours.

One of the most important tasks for ZCs and AZCs is to encourage communication and facilitate collaboration among the chapters within their zone and the SPS National Office.

→ To contact your ZCs and AZCs, visit www.spsnational.org/about/governance/national-council



Part I: Connect to SPS National

The 2017 – 2018 SPS National Council

1	AZC	Samuel Borer	University of Maine	samuel.borer@maine.edu
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2	ZC	Michael "Bodhi" Rogers	Ithaca College	mrogers@ithaca.edu
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5	ZC	Randy Booker	University of North Carolina – Asheville	booker@unca.edu
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6	ZC	Ed Greco	Georgia Institute of Technology	ed.greco@gatech.edu
7	AZC	Gabrielle Feeny	Kettering University A-section	feen4882@kettering.edu
7	ZC	Kiril Streletzky	Cleveland State University	k.streletzky@csuohio.edu
8	AZC	Benjamin Kulas	Middle Tennessee State University	btk2j@mtmail.mtsu.edu
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18	AZC	Christian Billings	Loyola Marymount University	blazer345@hotmail.com
18	ZC	Don Williams	California State University – Fresno	dwilliams@csufresno.edu

Part I: Connect to SPS National

The SPS National Office Staff

The SPS National Office staff are eager and equipped to connect our members and chapters to the resources they needed.

Our phones are staffed from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Eastern time and we can be reached anytime via email at sps@aip.org.

For questions regarding outreach, awards, scholarships, and internships, contact: sps-programs@aip.org

For questions regarding SPS membership, dues, and meetings, contact: sps-membership@aip.org

For questions regarding Sigma Pi Sigma inductions, regalia or other matters, contact: sigmapisigma@aip.org

All other inquiries may be directed to sps@aip.org or (301) 209 - 3007

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and connect to your zone facebook group to stay connected to local events:

www.facebook.com/SPSNational



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Part I: Connect to SPS National

SPS Awards, Programs, and Opportunities

How to Apply for Awards & Programs

Online Application System

All applications and proposals for SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma awards and programs, with the exception of the Outstanding Chapter Award and Zone Meeting Awards, are handled via a single online system. Details on how to apply and a links to the online application system are available on the award webpage, www.spsnational.org/awards or through your SPS membership profile membership.spsnational.org (click on "SPS Awards Application" in the upper right hand area).

Scholarships

Scholarships recognize outstanding academic performance, leadership and engagement with the community.

Applications due March 15

www.spsnational.org/awards/scholarships

The SPS Leadership Scholarship

- Several \$2,000-\$5,000 awards may be made each year
- Applicants must have junior level standing
- Awarded on the basis of academic performance and leadership in SPS

The Herbert Levy Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
Awarded to undergraduate students on the basis of scholarship, SPS participation, and financial need
- Established in the memory of the late Dr. Herbert Levy, by Margaret Sussman Levy

The Future Teacher Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
- Awarded to undergraduate students on the basis of scholarship, SPS participation, and a stated teaching career objective(s)

Peggy Dixon Two-Year Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
- Awarded to undergraduate students on the basis of scholarship, SPS participation, and attendance at a two-year college
- Established in the memory of the late Dr. Peggy Dixon

Kirsten R. Lorentzen Award

- One \$2,000 award is made each year
- Awarded to a female student in her sophomore or junior year of study
- Awarded to an exceptionally well-rounded student who excels in her studies as well as outdoor activities, service, sports, music, or other non-academic pursuits or who has overcome significant obstacles
- The Lorentzen Award is an Association for Women in Science (AWIS) Educational Foundation program administered by SPS

Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (SSAI) Academic Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
- Awarded to undergraduate students on the basis of scholarship and SPS participation

Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (SSAI) Underrepresented Student Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
- Awarded to undergraduate students who are from a group that is underrepresented in science and engineering, on the basis of scholarship and SPS participation

SPS and AAPT Mary Beth Monroe Memorial Scholarship

- One \$2,000 award may be made each year
- Awarded to undergraduate students majoring in physics or physics education on the basis of scholarship, SPS participation, attendance at a community college, and intent to pursue a career in education

Awards for Chapters

Chapter awards exist to foster collaboration and growth of the unique character of the chapter

www.spsnational.org/awards/chapter-awards

Future Faces of Physics Award

Applications due November 15

- Several awards of up to \$500 may be made each year
- Awarded to chapters for activities that promote physics across cultures

Marsh W. White Award

Applications due November 15

- Several awards of up to \$500 may be made each year
- Awarded to chapters for physics outreach activities to grades K-12 and the general public

SPS Chapter Research Award

Applications due November 15

- Several awards of up to \$2,000 may be made each year
- Awarded for chapter physics research projects

SPS Zone Meeting Travel Award

www.spsnational.org/meetings/zone-meetings

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis up to 10 business days before the conference

- Up to \$250 per zone per year may be allotted to support chapters traveling to the zone meeting
- Awarded to undergraduates on a first-come, first-served basis

Part I: Connect to SPS National

SPS Outstanding Chapter Award

Annual Chapter Reports serve as applications to this award

Applications due June 15

- Several awards may be made in each zone every year
- Winners receive a certificate and national recognition
- Awarded to chapters that demonstrate active involvement on the local, zone, and national levels in keeping with the mission of SPS in their annual chapter report
- Chapters may also apply for the Blake Lilly Prize through the Chapter Report
 - ✓ Winners receive a physics related publication and a certificate
 - ✓ Awarded to chapters or individuals that engage in physics outreach activities and submit a report about the activity
 - ✓ Established in the memory of the late Blake Lilly, by his parents

Awards for Individuals

Individual awards recognize excellence and encourage continued involvement with SPS www.spsnational.org/awards/individual-awards

Outstanding SPS Chapter Advisor Award

The most prestigious SPS award

Applications due March 15

- One award is made each year to a chapter advisor nominated by his or her students
- Winners receive \$5,000: 60% to the chapter advisor, 20% to the chapter, 20% to the department
- Awarded to a chapter advisor whose chapter has received an Outstanding Chapter Award within the preceding two years during their tenure as SPS chapter advisor, on the basis of:
 - ✓ Leadership
 - ✓ Student leadership development
 - ✓ Chapter support
 - ✓ Encouragement the advisor has provided to the chapter

SPS Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research

Applications due March 15

- Two or more awards may be made each year
- Awarded to SPS members on the basis of their research, letters of recommendation, and SPS participation
- Winners are able to attend and present their research at a AIP member society meeting of their choice (registration and travel costs up to \$1800 are eligible for reimbursement)
- Receive a \$500 honorarium for themselves and a \$500 honorarium for their SPS chapter

SPS Travel Award

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis up to 10 business days before the conference

- Multiple \$200 awards may be made each year for meetings
- Awarded to SPS members presenting their research at AIP Member Society national meetings
- Awarded to undergraduates on a first-come first-served basis
- Limited to one award, per person, per academic year

SPS Reporter Award

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis up to 10 business days before the conference

- Multiple \$200 awards may be made each year for meetings
- Awarded to SPS members reporting on national professional meetings for SPS publications
- Awarded to undergraduates, on a first-come first-served basis
- Limited to one award, per person, per academic year

SPS Programs

SPS SOCKs (Science Outreach Catalyst Kits)

www.spsnational.org/programs/outreach/science-outreach-catalyst-kits

Science Outreach Catalyst Kits, or SOCKs, contain an exploratory physics and science activity that is specifically designed for SPS chapters to use in outreach presentations to elementary, middle and high school students. Each SOCK comes with the basic materials to conduct a set of demonstrations, a comprehensive manual, and instructions on how to expand the demonstration to become a tried-and-true outreach activity. SOCKs are designed and implemented annually by the SPS National interns and National Office staff.

Help students of all ages explore gravity and astronomy concepts with the latest SPS SOCK. The 2017-18 SOCK explores the physics of gravity through several engaging activities that can be used in a variety of settings. Apply for a free SOCK today!

SPS Outreach Demonstrations

www.spsnational.org/programs/outreach/demonstrations

Looking for a new demonstration for an outreach event? Want to jump start your chapter on outreach? SPS staff and interns have designed easily-accessible online demonstrations to help you make a difference in your local communities. Each demonstration includes a parts lists, instructions, key physical concepts to explain, and demonstration videos (where appropriate). Engage your local community today!

Part I: Connect to SPS National

SPS Internship Program

www.spsnational.org/programs/internships

The SPS summer internship program offers 10-week positions for undergraduate physics students in science research, education and policy with various organizations in the Washington, DC area. Eligible applicants must be undergraduates, members of the SPS national organization, and have at least two years of college physics (or equivalent). SPS summer interns receive a stipend of \$5,700, local housing, travel costs, and have the opportunity to participate in a number of engaging supplemental activities that explore the full range of career options available to physics majors.

Career Toolbox for Undergraduate Students

www.spsnational.org/careerstoobox

The Careers Toolbox for Undergraduate Physics Students, a product of the Career Pathways Project, is a set of professional development tools that guide students through their career options and prepare them for success in the job search. Careers Toolbox workshops materials are available online and a new print edition of the student booklet will be available this fall.

Physicist Profiles

www.spsnational.org/career-resources/physicist-profiles

SPS compiles physicist profiles to help students, parents, and the public learn about the multiple career paths available to those who study physics, and typical factors associated with various jobs. Read about career options or submit a profile yourself!

Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ) Programs and Awards

Sigma Pi Sigma programs emerge from its mission to honor outstanding scholarship in physics; to encourage interest in physics among students at all levels; to promote an attitude of service of its members toward their fellow students, colleagues, and the public; and to provide a fellowship of persons who have excelled in physics. Programs are funded by the generous donations of alumni and underwritten by the American Institute of Physics. To learn how you can contribute, see donate.aip.org

ΣΠΣ Service to High School Physics Classes: Adopt-a-Physicist

www.adoptaphysicist.org

Adopt-a-Physicist connects high school students to real physics graduates, recruited primarily from among the Sigma Pi Sigma membership, who are eager to share their stories as a means of helping students understand the benefits of studying physics and the career opportunities it provides. Working in areas ranging from particle physics research to freelance writing, the participating physicists embody a huge range of careers, backgrounds, interests, and educational levels. Adopt-a-Physicist connects classes with the physicists of their choice through online discussion forums that are active for a set, three-week session.

ΣΠΣ Awards

Awards issued by the Society of Physics Students, the physics honors society

www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/awards

Worth Seagondollar Award

The most prestigious award offered by Sigma Pi Sigma

No set award cycle

- Recipients receive a medal and certificate
- Awarded to individuals who have served on the SPS National Council or Executive Committee and demonstrated extraordinary levels of service and commitment to Sigma Pi Sigma and the Society of Physics Students
- Nominations may be submitted by members of Sigma Pi Sigma or the SPS National Council, and selection requires a unanimous vote of the SPS Executive Committee

Sigma Pi Sigma Outstanding Service Award

Applications accepted on a rolling basis

- Awarded to individuals who have performed meritorious service to the field of physics, to Sigma Pi Sigma, or to a local Sigma Pi Sigma chapter
- Awards can be bestowed by individual chapters and do not need approval from SPS National
- Recipients receive recognition and certificate

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Awards

Applications due November 15

- Several awards of up to \$500 may be made each year
- Awarded to Sigma Pi Sigma chapters for funding of chapter inductions and events that aim to engage alumni or expand the recognition of Sigma Pi Sigma within the campus and surrounding community

→ To apply to the SPS & Sigma Pi Sigma awards, please visit the online application system through

www.spsnational.org/awards

or

membership.spsnational.org



ANNUAL CALENDAR OF APPLICATION DEADLINES

Mark your calendars!

The Society of Physics Students (SPS) and Sigma Pi Sigma have consolidated deadlines for awards, scholarships, and internships. There is now one deadline each season. These opportunities are available only to chapters and members, so remember to pay your dues to qualify.

FALL DEADLINE:

November 15

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award
Future Faces of Physics Award
SPS Chapter Research Award
Marsh W. White Award



WINTER DEADLINE:

January 15

SPS Internships



SPRING DEADLINE:

March 15

Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award
SPS Award for Outstanding
Undergraduate Research
SPS Scholarships



SUMMER DEADLINE:

June 15

Chapter Reports—including
the Blake Lilly Prize



ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES:

SPS Travel Awards
SPS Reporter Awards
SOCK Kit Requests



Learn more at

www.spsnational.org/calendar



SPS National Office • Email: SPS-Programs@aip.org • Tel: 301-209-3007

Part I: Connect to SPS National

Publications

www.spsnational.org/resources/publications

The SPS Observer

Each issue of *The SPS Observer* contains interesting feature articles, advice from experienced voices, chapter and zone activities, physics problems, society news, announcements, and meeting notes from SPS reporters. It is published in print and online formats quarterly. Print subscriptions are included with your annual SPS national membership dues. Be sure to keep your address up-to-date at membership.spsnational.org.

SPS News

SPS News is the bi-weekly e-newsletter from the Society of Physics Students. SPS News is delivered to current SPS members' email inboxes twice a month. Issues cover chapter- and program-related deadlines and announcements, upcoming scientific and member society meetings, zone meetings, REU and internship opportunities, SPS featured jobs, and more.

Radiations

Radiations is the official publication of Sigma Pi Sigma, the physics honors society. Published biannually, each issue contains interesting feature articles, connections to the broader world around us, community and member activities, physics news, society updates, member spotlights, and thought provoking pieces written by members. It is published in hardcopy format and online. **Subscriptions are included with your lifetime Sigma Pi Sigma membership dues - www.sigmapisigma.org/radiations.**

Join SPS National

SPS: local connection to a global community

SPS National represents all students interested in physics and astronomy. SPS helps to build a national community and voice for students. Membership in the national organization of the Society of Physics Students is important as a first-step professional affiliation for students. Connection to SPS National helps students and mentors transform themselves into members of the professional community. As SPS is a partnership between students and faculty, advisors and mentors are encouraged to join as well as a way to build community within departments and support professional development. The tools made available by SPS benefit the department as a whole.

SPS: a professional organization for students and their mentors

While course work provides the necessary foundation in physics, success in classes develops only one range of essential skills. SPS enables students to transform from "course-takers" into contributing members of the professional science community.

SPS: connecting students and their mentors with opportunities

SPS provides students with opportunities to develop effective professional communication skills, gain leadership experience, and be part of an

international professional network. A lifetime of interactions begins with SPS. Active involvement as an SPS member provides opportunities to present research at professional meetings, professional development tools and advice, access to a robust online job portal and career building resources, science outreach tools, connections to in the local community and beyond, and eligibility for competitive SPS scholarships, grants, and awards.

SPS: discover a wide range of career options

SPS supports the Careers Toolbox, a tool for undergraduates. It is designed to equip physics and astronomy departments and their students with tools for effective career preparation. The Careers Toolbox was designed to identify common features among physics departments with a strong record of preparing physics bachelor's for the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce and to disseminate that information to the physics community. Available as both workshop materials and a standalone student guide, the Careers Toolbox is designed to help undergraduate physics and astronomy students prepare to enter the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics workforce. The Careers Toolbox is a free-downloadable resource and can be found here - www.spsnational.org/sites/default/files/files/publications/careerstoobox.pdf.

SPS: working to improve the undergraduate experience

SPS is open to anyone interested in physics, welcoming students from all majors and diverse backgrounds to participate in the great science of physics. Locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, SPS provides important enrichments to the students' experience. Faculty mentors and other members of the physics community are also encouraged to be part of SPS.

Cost of membership

Membership to SPS National is \$24 per year (\$30 for international addresses). SPS membership dues are underwritten by AIP to keep the cost low for students.

Bulk membership Discount

Your SPS chapter can save by joining as a group. The more people you get to join SPS National, the larger the discount off your annual membership dues. The bulk membership application form is downloadable www.spsnational.org/about/membership.

New or renewing members	Discount
5-9	5%
10-24	15%
25-39	20%
40+	25%

Join SPS online now: membership.spsnational.org

Part I: Connect to SPS National

SPS National Member Benefits

SPS National paid members receive:

- *Physics Today* (monthly): A monthly award-winning publication
- *The SPS Observer* (quarterly) magazine for undergrad physics and astronomy majors
- Free membership in two AIP Member Societies for up to three years (undergraduates only)
- Free joint membership in the National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) or the National Society of Hispanic Physicists (NSHP)
- Eligibility to apply for a variety of SPS internships, scholarships, research, outreach and travel grants, and other awards
- *SPS News* e-Newsletter (bi-weekly), highlighting regional, national, and international SPS meetings, upcoming SPS award and program deadlines, SPS news, and other items of interest to the undergraduate physics community.
- Research and travel grants to attend regional and national meetings
- **PhysCon** – largest undergraduate conference for physics and astronomy majors
- Eligibility for outreach and chapter research monetary awards
- **Careers Toolbox** for Physics Students
- Professional development opportunities
- Connection to undergraduate-specific regional conferences and meetings
- Opportunity to run for the SPS national council and serve on SPS committees
- Participation in advocacy
- Opportunity to apply for free outreach materials and kits (SOCKs)
- Support the Physics community through outreach and community service events
- Access to diversity and inclusion resources/ best practices for your chapter
- PSISTAR: SPS entrepreneurship program



Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

SPS Community - It starts with the Chapters!

While SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma are nationally driven, the success of the organization depends on the activities carried out by the over 810 chapters at colleges and universities across the United States and internationally. The initiatives, programs, and opportunities conceived and planned by the SPS National Council are customized by each chapter to best serve the interest of the local chapter's members, department, campus, and geographical setting.

It is through local chapter activities that students become involved with SPS outreach, awards, scholarship opportunities, research, professional development opportunities, networking, and so much more.

Each individual chapter has a constitution and set of bylaws modeled after the SPS constitution that detail how the organization functions at the chapter level.

Annual Chapter Report

To be eligible for the SPS Outstanding Chapter Awards and the SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor award, each SPS chapter must submit an annual chapter report (www.spsnational.org/resources/chapters/annual-chapter-reports). These reports convey the many and varied activities of local chapters and provide important data used by the National Council and National Office to advocate for programs, funding, and other support

for local chapters. Those chapters that clearly exhibit and carry out SPS initiatives for their campus, community, and zone can be named as SPS Outstanding Chapters (learn more about Outstanding Chapters at (www.spsnational.org/awards/outstanding-chapter)). Outstanding Chapters are selected by the ZCs and AZCs on the SPS National Council.

The SPS National Council reviews all Chapter Reports to share the best practices of chapters. **If you are seeking ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to your AZC and ZC to learn about programs and initiatives that have worked for other chapters.**

Connecting with other Chapters

Chapters are also encouraged to plan joint activities with other chapters. You can find contact information for other chapters in your zone by contacting your zone leadership or through searching the SPS online zone directory (www.spsnational.org/about/governance/zones/zone-directories). Your AZC and ZC may also set up other ways for chapters to communicate including Facebook groups, listservs, or Googlegroups. Be sure to watch out for these channels and contribute announcements and news from your chapter.

Possible opportunities to collaborate include physics outreach days at local amusement parks, co-hosting a speaker, taking a tour of nearby research facility, or even just a social event like a picnic or trivia night.



Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

Zone Meetings

Each zone is encouraged to host at least one zone meeting each year. These are typically coordinated by the AZC and ZC of the zone, but any institution within a zone may work with their zone leadership to serve as a host or co-sponsor. Synopses of past meetings, a list of upcoming zone meetings and information on how to host a zone meeting can be found online at www.spsnational.org/meetings/zone-meetings. The National Office has toolkits available to assist zones with planning, publicizing and executing these meetings.

Zone meetings are important networking opportunities between SPS members, chapters, and the professional physics community. A typical zone meeting includes both scientific and social components. The scientific program may feature speakers, poster presentations by students, tours of campus, or industrial site visits. Social events may include ice breakers, team building activities like a ropes course, physics trivia, meals, design competitions, service projects, or joint outreach events. When planning your zone meeting be sure to include lots of time for your attendees to meet one another. It's through these connections that our community grows stronger!

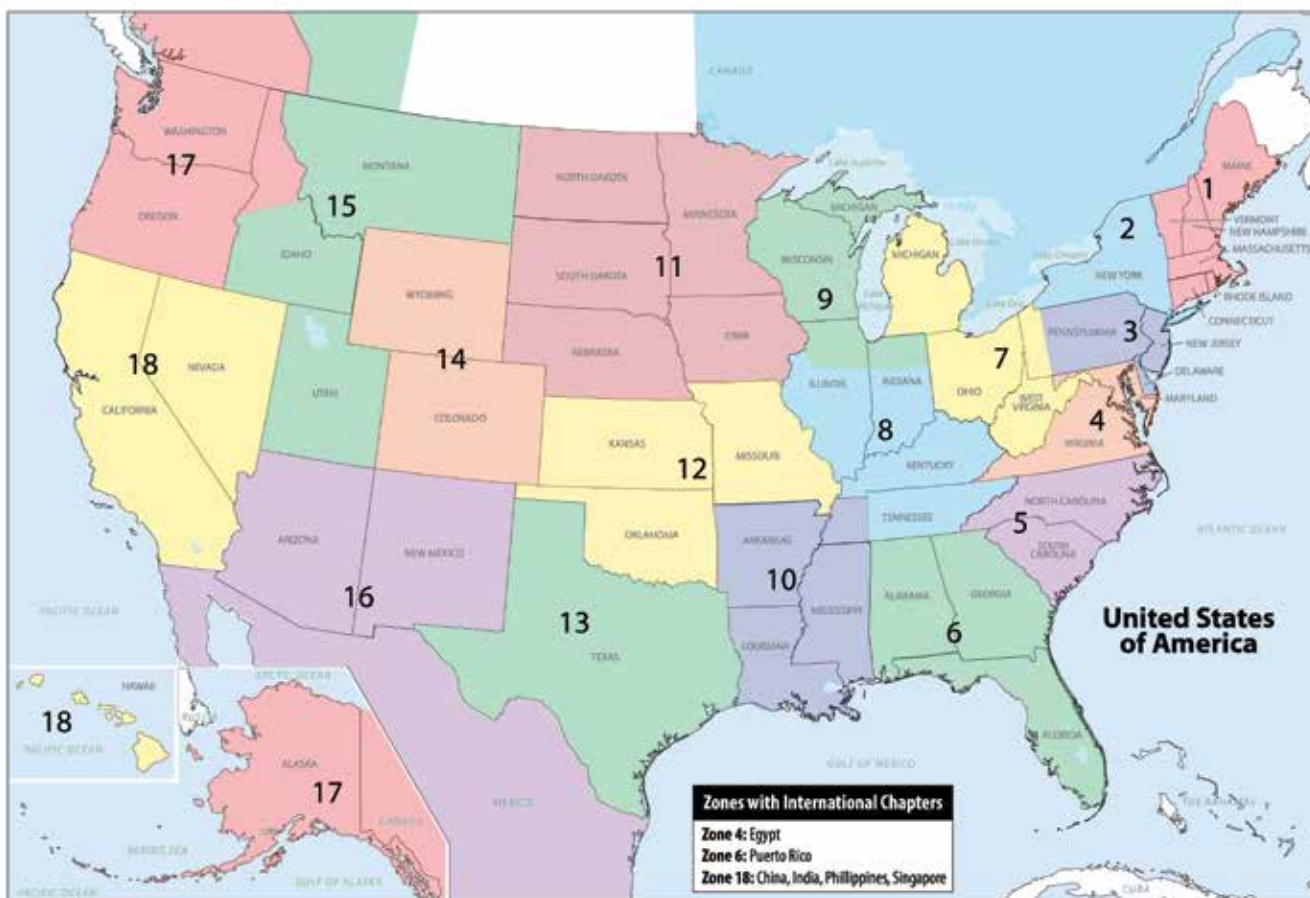
Starting an SPS Chapter

All institutions of higher education which regularly offer at least a two-year curriculum that includes physics and are accredited by the appropriate national or regional accrediting agency are eligible to have a Society of Physics Students chapter.

Chapters are chartered via petition to the SPS Executive Committee. Instructions and a template of the petition are available at: www.spsnational.org/about/governance/chapters/starting-new-chapter.

All chapters should have a slate of student officers and official faculty or staff advisor. Once the SPS Executive Committee has approved the petition, SPS will be in touch regarding specific procedures for installing your chapter.

→ Find your zone meeting
www.spsnational.org/calendar



Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

Maintaining a Healthy Chapter

The following list of 10 principles, tips, and suggestions, can help your chapter remain active, healthy, and an integral component of any physics and astronomy department:

1. Decide that your SPS chapter is going to make a meaningful contribution to the students and department.

Focus on professional development, outreach, and service projects. Decide that you can work on the culture of your department... and that YOU are going to be the people who make it happen. Remember: change isn't easy, and it takes time, but a year is a long time in the life of a department. Traditions begin rather easily... and stop without someone maintaining them.

2. Decide from the beginning that your chapter will participate in SPS Zone meetings.

Zone meetings provide the opportunity to socialize with other physicists, present research, and build a sense of student community within the region. Contact your Zone Councilor and Associate Councilor for information about the next meeting (www.spsnational.org/about/governance/national-council) in your Zone or nearby Zones. Make necessary plans (e.g., fundraise) well in advance. Be innovative in ways to cut expenses (e.g., some host chapters will invite visitors with space to roll out sleeping bags in the homes and dorm rooms of their members). The National Office also maintains some funding to support chapter travel to zone meetings - speak with your ZC about details.

3. Plan local meetings, tours, and social events - about one event per month.

Your chapter will benefit from SPS-sponsored chapter meetings with local speakers - which can be part of the department's regular seminar schedule, or a separate talk run by SPS - and tours of nearby academic or industrial laboratories. Member favorite events are really important: host a bad physics movie night, go to trivia night together, set up a scavenger hunt, or challenge another department/club to a friendly game. Be sure to put several social events on your calendar (e.g., parties and picnics) to encourage members to get to know one another. **A tried and true activity is an annual SPS Spring and/or Fall picnic.**

For speakers, ask physicists and other scientists from your campus or nearby schools or local engineers and other technical people who use the sciences and mathematics in industry and business. Your college alumni office may also be a good source of willing volunteers. Local speakers will usually speak to student groups at no charge to you, but do not forget to practice hospitality (e.g., write a thank you note, offer a small token of gratitude like a t-shirt, consider having a reception before the talk, or possibly take the speaker to dinner afterwards).

4. Look to the future.

This begins with Zone participation, and continues by communicating physics to the public with programs such as "Physics is Phun" to local grades K-12. Until every physicist (including the undergraduate physicist) is participating in education and community outreach, we as a professional community are not doing all we can to promote science literacy and appreciation. When it comes to science outreach to grades

K-12 and the general public, SPS can show the rest of the professional community the way. As physicists and astronomers, we must interact with the general public if we wish to explain who we are and why what we do is important.

Set up a math-physics tutoring service for your campus or a nearby elementary or secondary school. Help a local school organize and judge its science fair. Collaborate with other campus student organizations in projects of mutual interest. Present papers on your outreach programs at Zone meetings and on campus.

When your chapter has an established outreach program, you may wish to submit an article about it for publication in *The SPS Observer* or for inclusion in the SPS outreach demonstrations. Others may be able to adapt your ideas to their situation. We welcome submissions at sps@aip.org.

5. Involve students in the undergraduate research experience.

The research experience does not have to be publishable—the publishable stuff can come later, and the objectives of undergraduate research are too important to leave only to publishable projects. These objectives include the following:

- developing the skills and habits of mind that cannot be taught in courses,
- acquiring communication skills in presenting results at Zone meetings, and
- becoming a participant in the life of the professional community through involvement in meetings.

As a possible aid to starting and maintaining an undergraduate research program, even with very limited funding, the SPS National Office has outreach events that can be put together easily: www.spsnational.org/programs/outreach/demonstrations.

6. Make SPS visible.

Send your campus and other local newspapers descriptions of your members' outreach efforts to the local community, your participation in professional meetings, and other activities. Send the SPS National Office newsworthy items that we can pass on to other chapters. Place an SPS mailbox in the department mailroom, obtain an electronic mail address for SPS use, and arrange for a SPS student office/lounge. Point out to the department chair that these amenities are an investment in the morale and recruitment of physics majors. When the majors "own" a piece of the department, they have a sense of identity with it that coursework alone cannot provide. Participate with other campus organizations in projects of campus-wide interest. Have a public demo show. Making a Facebook group to promote events and meetings on campus can be helpful. Have an exhibit on new-student welcome week. If your school has a homecoming parade, have an SPS entry in it!

7. Make your chapter a valuable asset to the physics department.

The morale of your chapter can set the tone for the departmental culture. The accomplishments of your chapter can serve as an important and documentable asset in the recruitment of prospective students. Your chapter meetings can serve as colloquiums for the department.

Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

8. Involve freshmen and transfer students.

Too often an active chapter becomes inactive when one or two student leaders graduate. To make meaningful activity in your chapter a tradition, invite students to join SPS as soon as possible, and get them involved in all your activities and events without delay. Posters on campus and scheduled five-minute presentations in introductory university physics courses are helpful, and personal contacts are especially effective. Make sure some newer students attend Zone meetings, even if they only go as spectators. While their colleagues present papers, they begin visualizing themselves presenting papers too. If you have more volunteers than jobs, create more jobs (e.g., “chapter publicist,” “chapter historian,” etc., are all useful titles). Always ensure that succession plans are in place to transition leadership from one year to the next.

9. If your chapter does not already have a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter, take steps towards chartering one.

See the Sigma Pi Sigma Mission Statement, and information about chartering a chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma:

www.sigmapi.org/about/chapter-resources

10. Look over the Chapter Annual Report Form and SPS Calendar now.

These will help you get started by providing objectives at which to aim. In Spring, be sure to send the completed annual report to the SPS National Office by the deadline date. That way, your chapter will be eligible for an “Outstanding Chapter Award.”

Other Ideas for Your Chapter

For SPS Meetings and Colloquia:

- SPS colloquiums can include student speakers, such as those practicing their talks before going to Zone meetings, or those who recently completed a summer research project.
- Informal lunch “brown bag” meetings, with a speaker describing some project or recent trip to a conference are enjoyable.
- Discuss resume writing, job interviews, and the job market. Invite a guest speaker from your college’s Career Services office.
- Discuss recent articles in physics magazines or journals.
- Invite the department chairperson to lead an informal information session on what the department is doing and what its goals and problems are.
- Invite recent alumni to talk about their graduate school and/or employment experiences.

For Physics Outreach to Grades K-12 and the Public:

- Develop a “Physics is Fun” or other program to take into local schools (or that they can attend on your campus).
- Write up your demos and organize your equipment in a central location so you have them prepared and accessible for many members.
- Provide “Outreach Training” for members so that they feel comfortable in front of students.

- Invite local high school physics students to join SPS as members of your chapter and participate in your programs (there are no high school SPS chapters). This is also a splendid student recruitment tool for your department.
- Arrange for public viewing of astronomical objects through the department’s telescopes.
- Working with the chemistry and biology departments, arrange for tours of your campus laboratories by local schools.
- Help coach pre-college students for the exams that identify the United States Physics Team for the International Physics Olympiad.
- Help a local school conduct its Science Fair (e.g., volunteer to be judges).

Service to the Physics Department (making your chapter appreciated):

- Conduct problem-solving sessions for groups of students in introductory physics courses.
- Offer a tutoring service for individual students who come by your SPS room.
- Carry out a course evaluation survey for the physics department.
- Set up study groups for upper level physics courses.
- Prepare bulletin boards and window displays illustrating physical phenomena, historical personalities, the influence of physics in society, the department’s programs and personnel.
- Host a SPS Zone meeting.
- Publish a departmental newsletter or year in review. This can be sent to alumni, prospective students, donors, university administrators, students’ parents and friends, colleagues in other institutions, and other friends of the department with whom you wish to maintain contact.
- Maintain a chapter and departmental scrapbook or Facebook group.
- Keep examples of previous year’s shirt designs and outreach materials.
- Collect, organize, and post information about graduate schools. Your department chair receives loads of this stuff all the time and would appreciate having someone take the task of dealing with it off their hands. Check out www.gradschoolshopper.com.

Social Events:

- Hold a student-faculty picnic at the beginning of the academic year, and another at the end of the academic year.
- Have a chapter camping trip or annual field-trip.
- Have parties at holiday times.
- After a big exam, have a “decompression party” at a faculty member’s house.
- Plan to have a personalized Sigma Pi Sigma induction ceremony every year. An evening banquet with a speaker, presented with class and engaging all the department, can become a high point of the departmental calendar. Make it special.

Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

Membership Promotion:

- Participate in Freshman Orientation Programs that acquaint new students with campus organizations.
- Have SPS members visit introductory physics classes and make a five-minute presentation.
- Involve interested freshmen in all SPS activities. Involve them first; and then membership will take care of itself.
- If the department has a graduate program, invite the graduate students to all SPS functions, and to join SPS and hold offices. In some universities, the graduate students are more active in SPS than the undergraduates!
- Place prospective majors on your mailing list during new student recruitment. The accomplishments of your chapter can be a tremendous asset for recruitment.
- Give an SPS National membership as a door prize as part of the drive for new members.

Fundraising:

- Design and sell chapter T-shirts or coffee mugs. **The SPS National Office can provide logos and assistance.**
- Collect used textbooks, journals and calculators and have a sale. Faculty usually have a few items to donate.
- Have a garage sale.
- Ask the department chair if the SPS can sell coffee, donuts, soda, or pizza.
- Bake cookies and sell them.
- Use your connections with local businesses to obtain items to raffle.
- Offer tutoring services to introductory courses one day a week.

Many SPS activities can be supported with a small budget funded by local chapter dues. As a campus organization, your SPS chapter may be eligible to receive an allocation from the Student Government Association upon the submission of the necessary paperwork and budget. Often your physics department will assist your chapter with transportation and mailing expenses. Travel can be done cheaply if members split car expenses and use sleeping bags at the destination (assuming the host is willing).

Conducting SPS Chapter Meetings and Building your Chapter

The personality of a local SPS Chapter is as unique as the individuals that comprise the chapter. Each chapter has the ability to determine the frequency of their chapter meetings and the content/activities conducted within their chapter meetings. The best practices for chapter meetings are to incorporate activities and events that foster a sense of community and culture for your local department. SPS is whatever it needs to be and we celebrate these variations.

The below list includes great ideas for things that local chapters can do to help foster community and culture and can form the basis for the agendas of your chapter meetings:

Encouraging National Membership

SPS leaders are encouraged to work to get the entire local chapter registered as dues paying SPS members. The benefits are many. For one, all the members in the chapter have a common set of knowledge about SPS programs and opportunities. This builds community and energy for participating in the larger organization. Many chapters have SPS National membership as a requirement for travel with the chapter, and find creative ways for fundraising to help students with the \$24 annual dues. There is a reduced rate if chapter members sign up as a group. Information pertaining to the bulk membership discount can be found here www.spsnational.org/about/membership.

Encourage Participation in SPS National Programs

Find ways to encourage chapter members to participate in SPS National programs and opportunities. This is another way to make the point that no matter what the size of the chapter, SPS members are a part of something bigger. Award winners and scholarship winners are recognized in SPS publications, both in print and electronically. For departments, these awards can serve as recruitment and retention tools, as they demonstrate the engagement and success of students and faculty mentors in the department. Students should also be encouraged to attend regional and national AIP member society and professional meetings. Students should be encouraged to present research at these scientific meetings, but should be encouraged and supported to attend even if not presenting to become introduced to the professional community.

Participate in Tours, Field Trips, and Professional Speakers

One way to introduce students to the professional community is through exposure. Chapters are encouraged to arrange field trips, participate in tours of nearby national labs, industrial companies, hospitals, or other areas where people practice the physical sciences. Bringing speakers to campus (whether physically or virtually) to speak with students is a huge benefit to students that can help connect them to the larger physics community.

Connection to Your Local Campus and Community Beyond

Recruitment and retention: In many departments, the SPS chapter serves as a vehicle for recruitment and retention. Your chapter can create a number of activities that provide a sense of community for the physics department and those interested in physics. Example activities include organizing a physics demo fair for local primary and secondary schools, to sending chapter officers to classrooms to recruit new SPS members, to hosting banquets for incoming underclassmen and graduating upperclassmen.

Building community as a campus group: SPS chapters are encouraged to interact with the larger campus community, so that physics is not just something done in the physics building, but others get to learn about physics, as well! SPS chapters can plan joint fundraising activities with other student organizations, hold picnics for faculty and students, plan career fairs with other STEM departments, etc.

Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

Example Chapter Activities

There can be no standard program for a SPS chapter because each chapter is unique. The calendar below is provided as a guide for activities and programs your chapter may wish to consider throughout the academic year. Not every chapter will choose to engage in every element. Pick and choose those that work best for you!

Beginning of Semester:

- Membership Drive: Participate in Freshman Orientation Program to acquaint freshmen with SPS. Have a booth to encourage bulk registration for national membership.
- Visit introductory physics classes
- Put up SPS posters and meeting announcements
- Request SPS Sock Kit

September:

- Kick-off social (Ex. Faculty-Student Picnic or get-acquainted event)
- Fundraisers: Sell books donated by faculty, used textbooks, bumper stickers, chapter designed T-shirts, raffle tickets, car wash, etc.
- Planning for big events and outreach: Marsh W. White Award, Future Faces of Physics Award, and Sigma Pi Sigma Undergraduate Research Award proposals, brainstorm outreach events
- Post fall mailing materials
- Collect dues and fill out bulk membership form (for discount)
- Update SPS National chapter information

October:

- Talk by outside lecturer at meeting
- Bad physics movie night
- Attend SPS Zone meeting or plan to attend regional meeting
- Arrange to attend a national research meeting
- Hold a fundraiser for PhysCon

November:

- Submit chapter proposal for Marsh W. White Award & Future Face of Physics Award
- Submit student proposals for SPS Chapter Research Award
- Host an outside speaker/lecturer at monthly meeting
- Tour of physics/astronomy research laboratory (industrial, government, or academic)
- Submit chapter proposal for Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award

December:

- Business Meeting: Nomination of chapter member as candidate for Associate Zone Councilor

- Program planning for spring social event (set date, budget, etc.)
- Host a year end party

January:

- Submit student applications for SPS summer internships
- Prepare a member outreach event
- Hold fundraising event for Spring events

February:

- Arrange a talk by faculty member at monthly meeting
- Host a bad physics movie night
- Submit SPS Scholarship applications (early)

March:

- Talk by outside lecturer at monthly meeting
- Tour of physics research laboratory (industrial, government, or academic)
- Sponsor Physics Department Open House
- Business Meeting: Cast chapter vote in SPS elections
- Business Meeting: Nomination of chapter officers for next academic year
- Attend SPS Zone meeting

April:

- Sigma Pi Sigma reception, talk, and induction banquet
- Talk by outside lecturer at monthly meeting
- Business Meeting: Election of chapter officers for next academic year, preliminary planning for chapter program for next academic year.
- Submit new officers to SPS National database

May:

- Large Social event: faculty-student picnic and soccer game
- Submit Chapter Report before everyone leaves for the summer
- Apply for Blake Lilly Prize

Sample SPS Chapter Bylaws *

(Name of Institution) Chapter of the Society of Physics Students

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be "The (NAME OF INSTITUTION) Chapter of the Society of Physics Students".

ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Chapter shall be the advancement and diffusion of knowledge of physics, the encouragement and diffusion of knowledge of physics, the encouragement of interest in physics throughout the academic and local communities, and the introduction of students to the professional community.

Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section I. Society of Physics Students Membership

Membership in this Society of Physics Students Chapter shall be open to all individuals interested in physics.

**Section II. Sigma Pi Sigma Membership

Membership in Sigma Pi Sigma, the physics honor society included within this Society of Physics Students Chapter, shall be based upon character and academic and professional attainments and is not restricted to physics majors. Election to Sigma Pi Sigma members from among those candidates presented by the Sigma Pi Sigma nominating committee appointed by the chapter Advisor.

Clause 1. For undergraduate students in physics or related fields, the minimum requirements for Sigma Pi Sigma membership within this Chapter shall be as follows:

- A. All members-elect shall have completed at least the equivalent of three semesters (five quarters) of full-time college work.
- B. All members-elect shall have completed at least three semester (five quarters) courses in physics, each of at least three credit hours, which may be credited toward a physics major.
- C. *** All members-elect shall rank in the upper one third of their college class.
- D. *** All members-elect shall have attained at least a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 system for physics courses and for cumulative course grades in all courses.

Clause 2. For graduate students in physics or related fields, all members-elect either (a) shall meet the requirements for undergraduate members-elect, based upon their undergraduate records, or (b) shall have completed at least one year of graduate work, meeting departmental standards for satisfactory progress towards an advanced degree.

Clause 3. For faculty members, research staff members, and other qualified individuals, who are in physics or related fields, election to membership shall be based upon their professional attainments.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section I. Chapter Officers

The officers of the Chapter shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer; succession shall be in accordance with this order. Any two of the last three offices may be combined. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by this Chapter.

Section II. Elections

Officers shall be elected at a scheduled meeting in April of each year. Nominations shall be by open nomination at a meeting in the previous month. The election shall be by closed ballot. Officers-elect shall assume their offices immediately following the election and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are duly elected.

Section III. Sigma Pi Sigma Responsibility

Upon the installation of a Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter within the Society of Physics Students Chapter, one of the officers, who is a Sigma Pi Sigma member, and the Chapter Advisor shall be given specific responsibility of the affairs of the Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter.

ARTICLE V. CHAPTER ADVISOR

The Chapter Advisor shall be a faculty member appointed by the Chairman of the Physics Department, after consultation with the Chapter Officers. The Chapter Advisor shall provide liaison among the Chapter, the Physics Department, and the National Office of the Society of Physics Students. The Chapter Advisor will supply counseling to the Chapter, furnish continuity of experience in Chapter operations, and provide long-range perspective to insure departmental interest in and support of the Society of Physics Students. The Chapter Advisor shall assist the Secretary in furnishing the National Office with the required data and shall assist the Treasurer in transmitting fees and dues to the National Office.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Regular meetings shall be held monthly as determined by the officers. Special meetings may be called by the President or Vice-President. There shall be at least six meetings per year.

ARTICLE VII. DUES

Regular meetings shall be held monthly as determined by the officers. Special meetings may be called by the President or Vice-President. There shall be at least six meetings per year.

ARTICLE VIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt.

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment shall have been proposed at least one meeting previous to the time of vote. Such amendments shall conform to the regulations established by the National Constitution of the Society of Physics Students.

*Variations in bylaws, as required to suit local circumstances, are acceptable providing they agree with the spirit of the National Constitution of the Society of Physics Students.

**Article III, Section II and Article IV, Section III must be included by, and only by, institutions eligible to elect members into Sigma Pi Sigma (accredited, four-year institutions offering at least a bachelor's degree in physics).

***The requirement in Article III, Section II, Clause I(D) is not a constitutional requirement. However, it is usually easier to obtain a grade point average from the Recorder's Office than a class rank. Provision should be made to periodically check with the Recorder's Office that the specified GPA also satisfies Article III, Section II, Clause 1(C), which requires members-elect to rank in the upper one third of their college class and which is a minimum requirement specified by the National Constitution.

Part II. SPS Chapter Health – Development and Support

Seven Roles of SPS in the Physics Community

1. Undergraduate Research as a Teaching Tool.

Undergraduate research teaches lessons and fosters skills that course work alone often cannot reach. The mission of undergraduate research is not the research itself; it is the growth in self-confidence and experience for the undergraduate. The product of undergraduate research is not necessarily a publication; it is the transformation of the student from being merely a taker of courses into a contributing member of the professional community.

Through SPS Zone Meetings, *the SPS Observer*, online journal publications, and various programs, SPS launches students into their professions. creates an entrée into the profession through undergraduate research experience opportunities.

2. Physics Outreach to K-12 Students and the General Public.

Until every physicist is taking demonstrations to a local grade school at least once a year and working as colleagues with the teachers there to promote science literacy, the physics community is not doing everything possible to foster the public's appreciation of science. There are over 810 SPS chapters in the United States and internationally. Almost every one of them is near several elementary and secondary schools. SPS can take the lead in physics outreach.

3. Multiple Career Options are Open to Those With a Degree in Physics.

There is no major that guarantees a student a job. Therefore, students are student is well-advised to pursue a course of study that maximize theirs his or her options. AIP has both anecdotal and statistical evidence that graduates with a BS degree in physics do well in a wide spectrum of careers, and not only in the traditional track that proceeds through physics graduate school. Physics alumni are engineers, computer scientists, insurance actuaries, teachers, managers, patent lawyers, financial analysts, politicians, mathematicians, statisticians, etc. They have made careers in business, chemistry, meteorology, geology, biophysics, medicine, and many other fields. Peruse the SPS Careers Resources featuring profiles of physicists, careers information and statistics, and explore career opportunities. Find out more here - www.spsnational.org/career-resources.

4. Recruitment and Retention Tool for the Physics Department.

A student may come to a particular physics department for a pre-engineering program. But once engaged in the active SPS chapter by participating in undergraduate research, attending professional meetings, being involved in physics outreach to the local schools, and forming a network of like-minded colleagues, the student may stay with the department to major or minor in physics. This is especially true in light of the many career options that are open to someone with a BS degree in physics. In an environment where all academic departments are under pressure to maintain high enrollments, an active SPS chapter provides a definite advantage to the physics department.

5. SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma Members are the “Friends of Physics” throughout Society.

SPS exists to create a sense of community throughout the undergraduate physics world. SPS is the only institutionalized structure that the physics community has for engaging not only the student physicist, but the student friend of physics that may major in another field. Sigma Pi Sigma is the only institutionalized structure that the physics community has for engaging those many persons who have excelled in physics and then go forth into all walks of life, and pursue careers that include but are not limited to those of traditional physics.

Given the present lack of science appreciation in society, and the uncertain future of public support for basic research and science education, the SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma communities can be play a large role in promoting and advocating on behalf of STEM research and support.

6. SPS as an Introduction to the Other Professional Physics Societies.

SPS members who will pursue traditional physics careers should be aware that SPS offers free membership in various AIP Member Societies. SPS National will continue to promotes activities and engagement with Member Societies so that student members are aware of these societies that may be of interest to them as they begin their professional careers. subsequently in one's career.

7. Training for Leadership.

Twenty or thirty years from now, students who are now members of SPS and who are planning careers in traditional physics will be the leaders of the physics institutions and the culture of physics. Students who are now members of SPS but who go into other fields will similarly be leading the way in their circles of influence. The physics establishment, and the establishments of potential friends of physics, will be theirs to shape, for better or worse.

Through SPS activities, the student's professional development, communication skills, leadership qualities, and professional networking is enhanced in ways that cannot be realized in course work alone. SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma have unique and important roles to fulfill in shaping the culture of physics and its related disciplines.

→ Start a chapter today at
www.spsnational.org/about/governance/chapters

Part III. Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ)

Sigma Pi Sigma is the physics honors society. Chapters are restricted to colleges and universities of recognized standing that offer a physics major and students that are selected to join must meet a high standard of scholarship and outstanding achievement.

Membership and Benefits

Membership is not limited to undergraduates. Graduate students, faculty members, and accomplished scientists from all careers are welcome in Sigma Pi Sigma. While local chapters set standards for prospective members, the minimum national standards specify that undergraduates must be in the upper one-third of their class in general scholarship, have completed at least three semesters or five quarters of full-time college course work, and have completed at least three semesters or five quarter courses in physics that can be credited toward a physics baccalaureate degree. Graduate students are eligible for induction upon completing one year of study with satisfactory progress. Students who are not physics majors can be elected, provided that they meet the standards and have demonstrated an interest in physics.

A ΣΠΣ chapter is highly encouraged to induct qualified students and faculty members from nearby colleges that do not have a chapter. Physicists and astronomers in industry, government laboratories, and science educators can be elected by chapters on the basis of their professional record.

Lifetime Membership

Induction into Sigma Pi Sigma includes a lifetime membership. An entrance fee for \$54 is paid at the time of induction. This fee includes a one-year membership in the Society of Physics Student (SPS), an official ΣΠΣ pin, membership certificate, a lifetime subscription to Radiations magazine, and an official membership card. There are no annual dues to Sigma Pi Sigma or special assessment beyond the original entrance fee. Sigma Pi Sigma members can also purchase regalia, including honor cords, stoles, and tassels, to be worn in commencement ceremonies and other academic events through the SPS Store: www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/induction-center/insignia-regalia

Sigma Pi Sigma members are encouraged to stay engaged with the society throughout their professional careers. Members can volunteer in the Adopt-a-Physicist program (www.adoptaphysicist.org), serve as mentors or guest speakers for local SPS chapters, share personal and professional updates via a news update or profile for Radiations, or give back and support a scholarship for current students. Submit your information here: www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/radiations/hidden-physicist-submission-form

Encouragement

By honoring high achievement in physics and upholding high standards for election into Sigma Pi Sigma, the Society provides an incentive for all physics students to rise to excellence. The society is a source of encouragement to all students who study physics, whatever the ultimate level of performance achieved by the individual. Such encouragement ranges from promoting physics interest and science literacy in the general public, to challenging those who are pondering their potential for earning higher degrees. Sigma Pi Sigma urges its members to demonstrate this encouragement through personal service.

Service

With the recognition of accomplishment comes a responsibility to service at all levels. Nationally, Sigma Pi Sigma members can serve by helping to work for sound national science policies. Locally, Sigma Pi Sigma members can serve in community science education projects and in mentoring individual students. Through our member's personal initiative, members of the local community can learn more about physics and witness the high standards of Sigma Pi Sigma membership. Our colleges, universities, and our Society know that when we become alumni, because we respect the personal struggle for excellence, we will support the generations of students that follow. When the experience of Sigma Pi Sigma members is placed at the service of others, at any level, then Sigma Pi Sigma touches more lives than may be counted by the number of its members.

Fellowship

The criterion of Sigma Pi Sigma membership is proven excellence in physics. Sigma Pi Sigma members represent many generations of experience and wisdom that can be focused on the matters that unite us.

In Sigma Pi Sigma, there are no professional boundaries. One finds all professions represented in the Sigma Pi Sigma membership. There are many practicing physicists among Sigma Pi Sigma members, but excellence in physics has opened many career options to our members. Sigma Pi Sigma unites a diverse group of exceptional people who have shared in the culture and traditions of physics. With the common thread of this shared background running through so rich a diversity of generations and professions, Sigma Pi Sigma promotes a spirit of community among its members and encourages them to offer their collective wisdom and perspectives in the service of the larger society.

Inductions and the Ceremony

Chapters are highly encouraged to highlight the induction of new members by hosting an induction ceremony. The ceremony is an opportunity to honor those that have excelled academically and to bring positive attention to the program and department. The traditions of each chapter are unique, with each school carrying out this important recognition of excellence and department culture in their own way. Inductions can happen any time of year, with most chapters choosing Spring.

To celebrate, most schools invite campus administrators, friends, inductee relatives, and Sigma Pi Sigma Alumni to join in the welcoming of the newest inductees. This sharing of the experience is also a fantastic opportunity to showcase the department and connect with alumni. There are resources for the induction ceremony (including videos, Powerpoint presentations, detailed scripts, and ceremony format suggestions) located here: www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/induction-center

The SPS National office processes new Sigma Pi Sigma memberships electronically. Once students (or departments) have paid and are registered as new inductees, personalized induction materials are provided to chapter advisors for the induction ceremony. Please allow for 10 full business days for processing to avoid expedited shipping charges. For specific details, visit the virtual green folder:

www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/induction-center

Get involved in SPS



Join SPS online now!
membership.spsnational.org

Why Join the National Organization?

www.spsnational.org/about/membership

- *Physics Today* – An award-winning, monthly publication
- PhysCon - The largest undergraduate conference for physics and astronomy majors
- Eligibility for scholarships: SPS Leadership, SPS Future Teacher, and several others
- *The SPS Observer* – A quarterly magazine written for undergraduate physics and astronomy majors
- Research and travel grants for regional and national meetings
- Free membership in two AIP Member Societies for up to three years (undergraduates only)
- Free joint membership in the National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) or the National Society of Hispanic Physicists (NSHP)
- Eligibility for outreach and chapter monetary awards
- *SPS News* eNewsletter (bi-weekly) – Featuring upcoming meetings, awards, scholarships and jobs
- Careers Toolbox for Physics Students – Everything you need to be successful in your internship or job hunt
- Professional development opportunities
- Undergraduate-specific regional conferences and meetings
- Opportunity to run for the SPS national council
- Serve on SPS committees and gain leadership skills
- Participation in advocacy
- Opportunity to apply for free Science Outreach Catalyst Kits (SOCKS)
- Support the physics community through outreach and community service events

Submit Annual Chapter Reports

www.spsnational.org/resources/chapters

Collecting and sharing information about how SPS functions at the chapter level is imperative for the society as a whole. All chapters are strongly encouraged to record events, activities, successes, and challenges to produce an annual record of the chapter.

Update SPS Membership Information

membership.spsnational.org

Encourage student and faculty members to keep their membership up-to-date to ensure timely delivery of benefits!

Update Chapter Information

membership.spsnational.org

Make sure that your leadership and contact information is up to date.

Find SPS Chapter & Zone Leaders

www.spsnational.org/about/governance/zones

This zone map is linked to zone leadership and chapter directories.

Find SPS Constitution & Bylaws

www.spsnational.org/about/governance/constitution-bylaws

The constitution and bylaws of the SPS National Organization can be used as models for chapter governance documents.

Start a Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter

www.sigmapisigma.org/about/chapter-resources

Sigma Pi Sigma chapters are restricted to colleges and universities of recognized standing that offer a strong physics major.

Induct Sigma Pi Sigma Members

www.sigmapisigma.org/sigmapisigma/induction-center

Inductions are faster and easier with our user-friendly induction platform. Also, find formal induction resources and procedures.

Find Everything in this Book & More Online at:

www.spsnational.org/about/governance/spis-information-handbook



The Society of Physics Students & Sigma Pi Sigma

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