



SIGMA PI SIGMA

The physics honor society

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	Dining with the Director: An Induction Ceremony with Alumni
Name of School	California State University, Fresno
Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Number	0806
Total Amount Requested	\$500

Abstract

Fresno State's Society of Physics Students (SPS) chapter would like to hold an induction ceremony, led by Brad Conrad, with alumni, undergraduates, and graduates from Fresno State and local SPS Chapters to be recognized for academic and service achievements.

Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Project

Previously, our Sigma Pi Sigma chapter was declared dormant. Our small department of about 50 undergraduates and graduates and 13 faculty members struggled with creating a sense of community and inclusiveness. The only members were the officers elected, and the only activity was restocking the fridge available to undergraduate physics majors. Within the last year, Fresno State's SPS has partnered with Don Williams and Chevron to lead a new front in outreach, create a physics department t-shirt, have a voice in the physics department faculty meetings, take undergraduates to professional conferences, and provide opportunities for SPS members to go on national lab tours. Since then, our past SPS president, Annette Lopez, has been elected the Zone 18 Associate Zone Councilor and works closely with Don Williams, the current Zone 18 Councilor, to connect SPS chapters all throughout the zone and inform them of the many opportunities offered by SPS. The idea to open a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter at Fresno State and hold an induction ceremony with alumni, as well as other local SPS chapters, was sparked at a National Council meeting in Washington D.C. that Annette and Don attended. We would like to hold an induction ceremony towards the end of the academic year for alumni, undergraduates, and graduates to be recognized for their academic and service achievements.

We hope for a pleasant evening filled with socializing between various local SPS members, alumni, faculty, and National Council members. The venue will highlight various areas managed by our physics department. The evening will begin with entertainment from our famous outreach faculty, Don Williams. This will take place in an open grassy area just outside of the physics department office where we host weekly barbecues for our physics undergraduates. Don's demos include a bed of nails, liquid nitrogen ice cream, a ping-pong ball cannon, a water bottle rocket, and many more interactive ice-breakers. We will also offer to escort guests around our physics department, giving them a tour of our classrooms, lecture halls, Undergraduate Study Room, and Graduate Student Office. This would be a great opportunity to recruit for our undergraduate and graduate programs. Dinner will follow at Fresno State's Satellite Student Union, which is a multi-functional facility. We plan to order catering from a local business owner who specializes in Mediterranean food and from University Food Services (we will provide accommodations for vegetarians and vegans). Our Zone 18 Associate Zone Councilor has already confirmed that Brad Conrad will be leading the induction ceremony displaying past and new inductees. Lastly, we will offer to those interested in staying later into the evening a short planetarium show, led by Dr. Steve White.

How Proposed Project Meets the Purpose of the Award

Inviting Fresno State alumni provides an opportunity for students to learn about the numerous nonlinear career paths many take following the end of the physics undergraduate degree. Alumni of Sigma Pi Sigma will also be invited to promote a passion for service and speak to the fellowship amongst members of Sigma Pi Sigma. Fresno State is located in the Central Valley of California, providing us with the unique opportunity to socialize with chapters in both Northern and Southern California. Attendees can benefit by forming friendships across geographic barriers, practicing networking skills, and cultivating a sense of community within SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma. We also hope to take advantage of gathering supporters of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma to sell our physics department t-shirts designed by our SPS members. The money raised will help our chapter continue our outreach efforts with the local community.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project

Current SPS officers at Fresno State will manage the logistics of the planned evening. They will be responsible for securing the venues for the appropriate date, renting the speakers and microphone, reaching out to the catering company, purchasing any supplies for the dinner tables, and setting up the evening of the ceremony. The chair of our physics department, Dr. Doug Singleton, the Zone 18 Councilor, and Zone 18 Associate Zone Councilor will oversee the process and make sure the arrangements follow the proposed timeline. Our chair and National Council members have direct ties to the student presidents, chairs of other physics departments, as well as alumni. These contacts will help us send out an RSVP form and follow up with any questions our guests may have about attending. We will also market this to students via social media and word of mouth at regular SPS meetings. At this point, we can only estimate Fresno State student and faculty attendees, which may total to about 20 people. We hope to have a combination of about five Fresno State alumni and Sigma Pi Sigma alumni. We will also be allowing those who received an invitation to bring guests, which increases this estimate. The largest uncertainty is due to members from other SPS chapters, since we have not started to reach out yet, largely in part because we have not secured funding.

Project Timeline

At the beginning of February 2019, our officers will focus on confirming the final date for Brad Conrad's arrival, which will determine the date of the event. Once the date is secured, we will be able to reserve the Satellite Student Union for the dinner venue and the planetarium. The presence of alumni will be secured by the beginning of March from collaboration between the officers and our local National Council members and chair of our department. Around the middle of March, the invitation to RSVP will be sent out with the event details with the deadline for responses likely being April 1st. At this time, our officers will have an estimate on the number of attendees and can reach out to the catering company to secure our food arrangements.

Project Evaluation Plan

Our SPS officers would like to provide a guest book to commemorate the evening. This guest book will allow attendees provide constructive comments for our chapter's next induction ceremony as well as offer a means of measuring the number of attendees. Our National Council members will also follow up with the attendees via phone and email to collect more feedback. The final report will reflect the feedback and our efforts to collect suggestions for the next induction ceremony hosted by Fresno State.

Budget Justification

Here at Fresno State, we see no limits to pursuing the interests and goals of our SPS members; however, we have faced financial barriers in order to provide for our members. Fresno State offers financial support for official on-campus clubs. Unfortunately, this funding does not cover any food expenses. This is our main obstacle to holding this event. We estimate \$200 - \$400 for food, and \$150 for decorations and equipment rental fees, and \$200 for a facility rental fee. We hope to get the facility fee covered by financial aid from our student governing body or College of Science and Mathematics. The majority of these expenses are primarily incurred by the dinner portion of the evening.