



SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS

An organization of the American Institute of Physics

Future Faces of Physics Award Proposal

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| Project Proposal Title | Diversity and Inclusion in Physics at Juniata |
| Name of School | Juniata College |
| SPS Chapter Number | 3392 |
| Total Amount Requested | \$500 |

Abstract

The SPS Chapter at Juniata College will create a dedicated display on the wall at the entrance of our wing. Using the theme “we are all made of stardust”, the display will interpret diversity and inclusion in physics through this lens.

Proposal Statement

The entire Proposal Statement should be no more than 2 pages, and organized as follows.

Overview of Proposed Project/Activity/Event

The Physics wing at Juniata College has not been given a facelift in a very long time. As part of a more comprehensive project, this project will focus on one 15' wide and 8' high wall panel situated at the entrance to the wing focused on diversity and inclusion. The concept, inspired by artwork on the cover of the Winter 2017 issue of the SPS Observer by Carthage College SPS member Jordan Rice, is to create a diversity and inclusion display that views the issue through the thematic lens of "we are all made of stardust".

The display concept is to use vinyl lettering affixed to the wall over the display saying something along the lines of "We are all made of stardust...". The display itself will feature enlargements of Jordan's artwork (with acknowledgement) and about ten 12"x18" posters noting pioneers in space flight hailing from underrepresented groups in physics. (One such example can be found here: https://www.amazon.com/Mae-Jemison-African-American-Astronaut/dp/B00YATP4CQ/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1542125302&sr=8-1&keywords=mae+jamison+poster). We will also post a statement on foamboard developed by the department regarding our supportive environment for ALL students, that may include space for students to sign if they wish. The display will be bookended by full scale photos of our SPS members representing the diversity in our department – these will be turned into silhouettes which will have a backdrop of star and galaxies tying in with the overarching theme.

The goal is to promote the view of diversity and inclusion from this physics perspective – namely, we are all made of the same stuff, so it makes no sense to treat people differently based on race, ethnicity, gender, and the like. The prominent placement at the entrance to our wing will welcome and support current students, serve as a model for other departments, and communicate our philosophy and expectations to prospective students and their families.

How Proposed Activity Promotes Physics Across Cultures

In addition to the main diversity display, we will also have a nearby laminated map of the world identifying where our students come from, studied abroad, or had internships. We presently have 55 students in our department representing 6 different nations, and want that diversity on display in several parts of our wing as a recurring theme to celebrate. Our wing is outdated in terms of its décor, and this display will be the centerpiece of a renovation plan that is beginning to be implemented.

We feel this meets the stated goal of the award by supporting diversity and inclusion, and providing inspirational role models of underrepresented groups in physics who have accomplished great things, juxtaposed with silhouettes of current students who seek to do the same. This will strengthen our communities – both in physics and campus-wide – by providing a creative and forward-leaning display that many will hear about by word-of-mouth and come to visit. The themes that we are all made of stardust coupled with the star-silhouettes of students will, we hope, also evoke a sense of wonder and critical thought.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project/Activity/Event

SPS members will work closely with our SPS advisor, Dr. Borgardt, to plan coordinate, and realize this vision. We have already begun the marketing and communication aspect as we are working with the Dean of Students Office and our Vice-President of Diversity and Inclusion to clear the concept and the departmental statement. We are also working closely with our Director of Digital Media and an associated three-student team to plan the specific layout and on production and display of the various display elements.

SPS members are not only involved in the brainstorming and refinement of the panel concept, but also in selecting associated artwork and other displays to make the entire wing more welcoming and supportive. SPS members are also photographic models for the full-scale star-body silhouettes.

Project/Activity/Event Timeline

Significant planning on this project is already underway, and preliminary production work has started. Two students have already been photographed and prototypes of the star-background silhouettes are being created. We have already met with the Dean of Students, Facilities, and the Diversity and Inclusion Office for consultation and approval of various aspects of the project. In addition, we have had three weekly meetings with the digital media team for planning of the panel layout and selection of the vinyl lettering. The department has committed funds to support this renovation as well (explaining why our budget is great than \$500 – the department will cover any additional costs to complete this project). So, we feel well on our way to realizing this vision, and the solicit funds will help support this becoming a reality. We plan to have this display feature centrally in our 2018-19 Chapter Report and an accomplishment for this year, and are committed to completing this by March 2019.

Activity Evaluation Plan

We feel much of this section has been embedded in the design plan – we already have buy-in and creative input from a wide range of SPS members, and received enthusiastic feedback from the administrative offices mentioned earlier. The department conducts an annual student satisfaction survey, but this is done in early December and the work here will not be completed in time to be assessed in 2018. We plan to see an uptick in campus tours once our wing no longer looks aesthetically repulsive, and the diversity and inclusion display will be the first thing anyone entering or standing in our lobby will see. It will have a prominent placement, and make a bold statement about our shared views. So the formal assessment mechanism may amount to “word-of-mouth” and increased foot traffic, which we can only really subjectively monitor. But we are convinced, based on the level of enthusiasm and buzz this has created among department students and faculty, and administrators, that this will have a large impact on campus.

Budget Justification

We feel the budget does not need significant explanation and many of the specific items have already been address in other sections. Since we are already a bit over the 2-page recommended limit, we will be brief here. The essential elements outlined in the budget are essential and necessary component to carry out our vision for

the diversity and inclusion in physics panel. As noted earlier, the physics department has already committed over \$1000 to this wing aesthetic renovation, and has already committed additional funds to make this specific display a reality, explaining why our budget is over \$500. We seek SPS support of \$500, and the department will help to cover any costs over this amount. That the department is doing this during times when austerity measures are in place across campus speaks to both the import and commitment we have on this project, and we ask SPS national to fully fund this request and help us make this vision a reality in the coming months.