



SIGMA PI SIGMA

The physics honor society

Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	Lighting the way with Lighthouse Instruments: UVA Sigma Pi Sigma Luncheon
Name of School	University of Virginia
Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Number	153
Total Amount Requested	\$400

Abstract

The University of Virginia chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma will invite representatives from Lighthouse Instruments to attend our annual inductee luncheon. In doing so, we will be encouraging inter-disciplinary different career paths in physics as well as strengthening ties between our students and a local physics business.

Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Project

Every year, the UVA chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma holds a luncheon for its new inductees. This year, we wish to elevate our annual luncheon by inviting guests from a local physics industry, Lighthouse Instruments, to encourage excitement about applying physics to solving real world problems. With the requested funding, we will also be able to accommodate more physics and astronomy students at our luncheon than has been historically possible. With a large enough and enough refreshments to additionally host 50 non-inductees, we will bolster motivation to succeed in physics and become a member of Sigma Pi Sigma privy to such opportunities to network with peers and local physics businesses.

The project proposed here will expand upon past luncheons for Sigma Pi Sigma inductees, at which inductees had the beneficial opportunity to interact with the UVA faculty advisor for Sigma Pi Sigma. With our proposed project, a greater number of physics students will have the opportunity to meet our faculty advisor and forge advantageous connections with both the advisor and fellow physics students. It will also be valuable for all students involved to have an opportunity to interact with professional physicists who work outside of a strictly academic environment. Representatives from Lighthouse Instruments have the ability to inspire students to consider the benefits of hard work and high achievement in physics classes and research, even if students do not consist of pursuing a career in academia.

How Proposed Project Meets the Purpose of the Award

With the proposed project, we will add distinction to our induction ceremony by obtaining additional support for and acclamation of students' accomplishments in physics. Having an external professional institution participate in celebrating the achievements of Sigma Pi Sigma inductees will encourage more students to strive to be a part of the UVA chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma. Ultimately, by demonstrating the benefits of community and networking opportunities, we will increase the induction of new members in the years to come. This event will also enhance our inductees' first impression with our chapter, which will drive engagement to make a more active and effective chapter. By inviting a prolific speaker, and advertising to the greater UVA physics community, we will broaden our reach throughout the university. This will create more engagement and allow for the continued growth of our chapter.

Finally, the annual inductee luncheon has historically been a wonderful opportunity for new Sigma Pi Sigma members to get to know one another and forge stronger ties within the physics community at UVA. With increased funding, we will make it possible for more students to benefit from this opportunity, e.g. allowing current members of Sigma Pi Sigma to attend the luncheon and provide encouragement and inspiration to the next generation of aspiring physicists at UVA.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project

- **Personnel and Marketing:** The current executive officers of Sigma Pi Sigma at UVA will plan this event with support from other officers of UVA SPS. The responsibilities will be divided as follows:
 - **Sigma Pi Sigma president:** contact representatives from Lighthouse Instruments and create a general schedule for the event. Additionally monitor progress, keeping in mind the evaluation criteria outlined in the “Project Evaluation Plan” section given below
 - **Sigma Pi Sigma vice presidents:** secure a venue and refreshments for the event. Keep track of RSVPs
 - **Sigma Pi Sigma outreach and social chair:** advertise the event to physics, astronomy, and engineering students through email listservs, social media, and posters. Additionally ensure the event is advertised at weekly SPS meetings leading up to the event.
- **Sigma Pi Sigma member participation:** all new inductees of UVA Sigma Pi Sigma will be expected to attend this event as primary guests. Existing members will also be highly encouraged to attend, bringing the total anticipated number of Sigma Pi Sigma members to about 25 students. In addition, we will invite other SPS members and physics and astronomy students to attend, bringing the total anticipated attendance to 75.

Project Timeline

- ❖ The event will take place on April 7, 2023
- ❖ Catering will be finalized by the Monday before (March 27)
- ❖ Advertising to students will begin the day of Sigma Pi Sigma inductions, which takes place two weeks before the event (March 24). Advertising will be done every couple of days starting from this point, through multiple media outlets.
- ❖ The venue will be secured at least one month before the event, i.e. by March 3. By this time, we will finalize the details of the Lighthouse Instruments representatives’ visit for our luncheon and ceremony in April.

- ❖ Lighthouse Instrument representatives are scheduled to give a talk at a UVA SPS meeting on January 27th, 2023. We will follow up this meeting shortly thereafter with a request to have representatives come again for the proposed event in April.

Project Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the performance of the luncheon and how well it succeeded in connecting Sigma Pi Sigma students to one another and to the greater UVA physics community, the chapter will maintain records of the participants. This will include noting the number of new inductees for this year, as well as new inductees from previous years and physics students who are not yet members of Sigma Pi Sigma. Furthermore, we will track attendance at events before and after the luncheon to see if it will increase overall engagement within our local chapter. In particular, we will compare the number of new inductees during the spring of 2024 to the number of new inductees during the spring of 2023. An increased number of inductees will serve as an indication that the proposed event will be successful in encouraging the dedication and hard work necessary to become a member of Sigma Pi Sigma. We also hope that this event will connect the new inductees to old Sigma Pi Sigma members. We will therefore make a point of contacting existing members of Sigma Pi Sigma and obtaining their feedback on the event, inquiring after whether they felt they had an adequate opportunity to be encouraged and inspire new inductees. We will additionally poll physics students who are not yet Sigma Pi Sigma inductees and ask them whether they enjoyed the event and felt more likely to attempt to be inducted into the chapter in the upcoming years. Finally, we will also ask for feedback from the recent inductees on what they thought went well or what could be improved.

Budget Justification

The proposed budget is critical to the success of meeting the goals of our induction ceremony. First, the food budget is important to market the event to the wider university community. By providing an incentive for attendance, we are more likely to see engagement. Furthermore, it will help us build a strong reputation for future events so that we can keep higher attendance in the following months. Finally, providing food will offer all attendees the opportunity to socialize with the Sigma Pi Sigma members. This socialization is critical for creating a strong community within our chapter, and providing refreshments is an excellent way to create an organic social situation.

The money for gas is also critical to the success of our event. We want the experience as easy as possible for our presenters, as well as present a professional Sigma Pi Sigma organization.

paying for the Lighthouse representatives' travel expenses, we will accomplish both of these goals. Furthermore, the presentation will provide further engagement, generate excitement for future events, and improve the overall atmosphere of our event. Therefore, removing as many barriers as possible to get the best presentation possible will strengthen our organization overall. Finally, we believe that spending money on decorations for our event will further enhance the luncheon's atmosphere. The more welcoming the atmosphere, the more effective we will be in forging strong bonds between the new inductees. This will also make the event more appealing to the larger local physics community, which will strengthen our position and aid in creating a more interconnected, open environment between undergraduates within our department as a whole.