



SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS

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Dr. Craig Group, SPS Advisor
University of Virginia
Department of Physics
382 McCormick Road
Charlottesville, VA 22904

Dear Dr. Craig Group:

Congratulations to you and your chapter for your hard work!

We are writing to give you feedback on your chapter report for the 2012-2013 academic year. We received hundreds of chapter reports each year, and I am always amazed at how much effort, time and energy that faculty and students all over the country manage. This year,

University of Virginia Chapter of the Society of Physics Students
has been designated honorable mention, and named a
Distinguished SPS Chapter

The review of all submitted chapter reports is an undertaking of the SPS National Council. Each report submitted is reviewed by a minimum of four council members. The designation as an "Outstanding SPS Chapter" or as a "Distinguished SPS Chapter" is based on an assessment of the depth and breadth of SPS activities conducted by your chapter and presented in the report in such areas as physics research, public science outreach, physics tutoring programs, hosting and representation at physics meetings, providing social interaction for chapter members, and participation in SPS regional and national level programs. Each year approximately 10% of all SPS Chapters earn the "outstanding" recognition. And, based on the activity and level of student engagement presented in your report, we can easily say that your chapter is among the top 20% of all 772 SPS chapters.

Recognition of SPS Chapter accomplishments will be printed in an upcoming issue of the *SPS Observer*. We encourage chapters who are recognized as "distinguished" to notify their university news and media offices, or their local press. You and your officers have earned a moment in the spotlight to recognize the efforts that you make to build community and propel students into their careers as prepared professionals.



SPS is an organization of the American Institute of Physics

As part of the chapter report review, the SPS National Council Members are asked to provide feedback on every report. We include the comments from your report here. The reviewers were asked to provide some positive feedback and also to look for ways that the chapter might increase its engagement of students or enhance programs moving forward that might put your chapter into that “outstanding” category when compared with other chapters around the nation and in a few international schools. These comments are included in the table below.

SPS Chapter Report Review: University of Virginia
General Comments from Reviewers:
Physics Major Dinner is a great idea to connect students with professors.
Suggestions for Improvement:
More details and pictures on the Physics Day Show would be appreciated. For instance, did anyone present their research? Photos, etc. Increase the Outreach activities.

While your school’s chapter reviewed well, many times, the report does not reflect as well as it might the full scope of the chapter’s activities. Writing a report that truly depicts the nature of the chapter is important for many reasons. First, it is the primary way for the national organization to be made aware of your accomplishments. More importantly, an end of the year review and record for your own chapter’s continuity can be critical to the sustained success of the chapter. A new addition to the review process this year was a request to the SPS National Council leadership to begin a “best practices” list by recording innovative ideas from the chapter reports that we can share with everyone. We have also included a draft copy of this list. We think that idea sharing among chapters is one of the most fruitful ways to make an impact on students in programs across the country. We encourage you to share these ideas with your student leadership. Also, if you would like to see what some other chapters are doing, the SPS website at www.spsnational.org has many examples and ideas, or log on to the SPS Chapter Report wiki workspace (URL on the best practices list), where all chapter leaders can access all submitted reports to use as examples and to get ideas about what other chapters find effective in engaging students in the professional development activity that has a big impact on recruitment and retention in department programs.

At the SPS National Office, we understand that SPS is only as effective in the context of the work of all the chapters, so we are sincerely grateful for the work that you and your students do on behalf of SPS. I know from many years of personal experience as a chapter advisor, when a chapter is thriving and growing and doing effective work, the advisor is often doing things “above and beyond” for students. Much of what is required may be “behind the scenes” and go unnoticed or unrecognized by your own peers or supervisors. In addition, advisors of very active chapters see the value in developing the innate skills and gifts of leadership among the students they serve. To have your group named a Distinguished SPS Chapter is a testament to your own leadership skills and ability to bring out leadership in your students as much as it is an acknowledgment of the

performance of the chapter in the report. It is an admirable choice that you make to serve as an SPS Chapter advisor. In reading the many chapter reports from around the country, I am humbled and inspired by the many dedicated individuals that serve as advisors to the students that SPS seeks to serve.

Congratulations to you and your chapter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, or if I can be of any assistance in helping you in your good work. I look forward to working with you as your chapter continues in its efforts to make a difference in the lives of students.

Sincerely,



Toni Sauncy
Director, SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma

cc: Dr. Teresa Sullivan, President
Dr. Joe Poon, Department Chair

Encl: best practice list, certificate