



**PROCEDURE
FOR THE RECEPTION
OF MEMBERS
INTO
SIGMA PI SIGMA**

**NATIONAL PHYSICS HONOR SOCIETY
WITHIN THE SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS**

I. Welcome [Presiding Officer]

Welcome to our reception ceremony for new members of our Sigma Pi Sigma chapter.

The Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter of (Name of Institution) was chartered on (Date of Charter). Sigma Pi Sigma exists 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 towards their fellow students, colleagues, and the public; to provide a fellowship of persons who have excelled in physics. Since its founding at Davidson College in 1921, _____ members have been inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma. Our chapter has inducted _____ members since it was chartered. Today we will add the newest $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ members to our Society. To begin the induction, I have asked _____ to share the history of Sigma Pi Sigma with you.

II. History (three transparencies)

The history of Sigma Pi Sigma begins in 1920. That year several physics students and faculty members at Davidson College in North Carolina decided that a physics honor society would be a good idea. In addition to recognizing superior physics achievement, an honor society could bring those interested in physics into closer association and encourage them in their professions.

Their idea was realized on December 11, 1921, when five students and four faculty members, meeting in the home of the head of the Davidson College Physics Department, formed a group which they named Sigma Pi Sigma. (*Show Transparency #1—first page of Davidson Red Book*). After several years, the Davidson $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ members began to think that the benefits of $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ membership could be shared with others. $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ began to grow with the installation of a second chapter at Duke University on May 14, 1925; a third chapter was chartered at Pennsylvania State University on May 17, 1926, by Marsh White.

The first national convention of $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ was held at Davidson College in 1928 with the six existing chapters participating. By 1929 there were ten $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ chapters, (*Show Transparency #2—chapters and installation dates*). At the third national convention at Purdue University in 1934, the original designation of “fraternity” was changed to “society” and all elements of secrecy were removed. In 1936, $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ became an Associated Society in the Physics Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In 1945, $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ became a member of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS), the national accrediting organization. By the end of the 1940’s there were 73 chapters. In the early 1950’s $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ became an Affiliate member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

During the fifties, the American Institute of Physics (AIP) and $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ began discussing the role of students in AIP. The AIP Student Sections were established and work began on drafting a Constitution and Bylaws that would result in the union of $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ and the AIP Student Sections and the creation of the Society of Physics Students (SPS). At the eighth national convention of $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$, held at Purdue University in December 1967, the union between the AIP Student Sections and $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ was approved. On April 22, 1968, articles of agreement were signed, creating the Society of Physics Students with $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ included as an honor society within SPS. At the end of 1969, there were 223 chapters.

Our Society continues to grow and today (*Show Transparency #3*) there are over 460 chapters with more than 75,000 members. This membership cuts across generational lines. Our first members were inducted in 1921. Our newest members are being inducted today. This represents many generations of experience and wisdom that can be brought to bear on the matters that unite us.

Brief Local History (optional)

Presiding Officer: An important aspect of Sigma Pi Sigma membership is a responsibility to service. I have asked _____ to speak about service.

III. 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 liaisons and in mentoring individual students. Such personal initiative provides opportunities for all members of the local community to learn more about physics and provides visible testimony to 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 us. 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.

Presiding Officer: Our own chapter serves in many ways. (Here mention the various service projects of the local chapter.)

Presiding Officer: As is traditional in honor societies, Sigma Pi Sigma has a key, a motto, an insignia and a seal.

I have asked _____ to explain the symbolism.

IV. Symbolism (four Transparencies)

Motto: The motto of the Society is ΣΚΕΨΙΖ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΗΖ ΣΥΝΕΣΕΩΣ
(pronunciation: Skep-sis Praw-stah-tays Soon-ess-ea-os)

This motto, translated from the Greek, is “investigation, the forerunner of knowledge.” Our name, Sigma Pi Sigma, comes from the first letters of this motto. The motto emphasizes that experiments are the basis of progress in science.

Key: The key is the original design. It has the shape of the historic standard voltmeter. Arched across the top is the name of the society. In the apex of the key is an incandescent lamp connected to a dynamo in the center.

The pin, which symbolizes your membership in the society, has this shape.

The founders of the Society used the standard voltmeter to symbolize the high accuracy which is the hallmark of careful experiments; the lamp is the symbol of knowledge and the dynamo represents the creative energy that is so necessary to productive research.

Insignia: The official insignia consists of an outline figure of the key with a scroll superimposed on the stem. The Greek word Σοφία, or knowledge, is written on the scroll.

Seal: The seal is a circle with the name of the Society around the top. The greek word φυσικά, the root word for physics, is in the center. At the bottom is the founding date of ΣΠΣ.

V. The Induction

[Presiding Officer or designated individuals]

Our new members should always remember that Sigma Pi Sigma was founded by students and continues to exist mainly for their benefit. The standards for $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ membership are very high so that only those deeply interested in physics will be eligible for membership.

We will now induct the new members. Each new member, when your name is called, please come forward and receive your pin and certificate and sign the membership book. Your signature in the membership book signifies your acceptance of your Sigma Pi Sigma membership and of the responsibility to service that goes with it.

(Call Names)

It is now my great privilege to declare you members of Sigma Pi Sigma, and having all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of members of this Society.

VI. The Charge to New Members

[Presiding Officer or designated individual]

Those of us who are gathered here today have a real and enduring interest in physics. We believe in the importance of physics as a basic science and as a contributor to a strong and just society and country.

We charge you to continue your commitment to physics, working to assist the development of interest in physics at all possible levels. One finds Sigma Pi Sigma members among all professions. There are practicing physicists among Sigma Pi Sigma members. Excellence in physics has also led members into other careers. Through these members, Sigma Pi Sigma has enriched the world beyond just the professional physics community. 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 in physics, Sigma Pi Sigma promotes a spirit of professional community among its members and encourages them to offer their collective wisdom and perspective in the service of the larger society. You are joining a group in which you may play an active part for the rest of your life. We are happy to welcome you into this fellowship.

Some Suggested Orders of the Induction

A. The Full Ceremony

- I. Welcome
- II. History
- III. Service
- IV. Symbolism
- V. The Induction
- VI. The Charge to New Members

B. Possible Alternate Short Version with Program

- I. Welcome
- II. History Video shown—printed history in program
- III. Service—reprint of the *Radiations* article about Marsh White or perhaps a small bound booklet containing information about all of our honorary members.
- IV. Symbolism—printed and explained on program
- V. The Induction
- VI. The Charge to New Members

C. Possible Alternate Short Version

- I. Read the Sigma Pi Sigma Mission Statement
- II. Symbolism
- III. The Induction

D. Possible Alternate Short Version

- I. Welcome
- II. The Induction
- III. The Charge to New Members

E. Your Version

- I. Please share your version with the ΣΠΣ National Office.