The Society of Physics Students at the University of Central Florida proposes to host a speaker who supports the promotion of physics across cultures. In collaboration with organizations like Women in Physics and the National Society of Black Engineers, we hope to amplify the perspectives of underrepresented minorities in physics.
Proposal Statement

Overview of Proposed Event

At the proposed event, a guest speaker will discuss their path through the world of physics, their research interests, and their hopes for the next generation of traditionally underrepresented minorities in physics. The primary goals for this event are to highlight and celebrate an accomplished physicist who has faced adversity as a minority in the field, and to educate all attendees about the adversity that minority students face on a regular basis, and what can be done to alleviate those pressures.

Women and people of color have been, and continue to be, underrepresented in the field of physics. In the context of increased racial tensions, we felt that now, more than ever, it is important to use science and engineering as a platform to unite the University of Central Florida’s student body. We hope that this event will encourage all attendees, and that this emphasis on support of diversity will help in retaining students and increasing the amount of STEM degrees earned overall, but especially among underrepresented minorities, thus expanding the modern view of a Physicist.

The target audience includes undergraduate and graduate students as well as post researchers from within the department, as well as students from partnering minority registered student organizations on the University of Central Florida (UCF) campus, such as the Women in Physics Society, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the Society of Women in Space Exploration. We anticipate that at least 100 people will attend.

Our chapter is well positioned to host this event as evidenced by the success of our previously related meetings and department-wide initiatives such as the APS Bridge and IGEN programs. For instance, each year, we host a meeting with a guest speaker from the Office of Diversity and during which we discuss the effects of implicit bias on underrepresented minorities. The Department of Physics has hosted many conferences in the past (Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics 2013, APS National Mentoring Community Conference 2020, Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics 2022) and has taught our chapter how to organize and execute these kinds of events.

How Proposed Activity Promotes Physics Across Cultures

As mentioned in the project overview, women and people of color are underrepresented in the field of physics and STEM disciplines in general. Reports from the American Institute of Physics demonstrate that while the number of women and African-Americans earning degrees in physics has increased, the percent earned by women is still hovering below 25 percent and the percent earned by African-Americans is below 5 percent. The Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (CUWiP) and the APS Bridge Program have shown that supporting underrepresented minorities through mentorship is just one way of increasing representation in the field. This event will not only strengthen the relationship between underrepresented minorities and their peers, but also benefi...
students and potential mentors. This project falls in line with the goals of the Future Faces of Physics Award by actively engaging students, staff, and faculty in conversations that will aid in the promotion of historically marginalized groups.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Event

Riley Havel, the President of the UCF chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) in charge of planning the event in collaboration with Myrla Phillippe, the President of the UCF chapter of the Women in Physics Society, their respective officer boards, and faculty SPS advisors Dr. Adrienne Dove and Dr. Costas Efthimou. Progress will be monitored using the proposed event timeline and monthly checks with the officer boards and advisors.

The event will be marketed via email and an online campus involvement platform (KnightConnect). Within the department, the event will be marketed via email to undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral students, staff, and faculty (if given sufficient notice, the event may be able to serve as a traditional departmental colloquium). Outside of the physics department, the event will be marketed through partnering student organizations. To intents of collaboration have been confirmed with the Women in Physics Society, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the Society of Women in Space Exploration. Inquiries for collaboration have also been sent to UCF Scientistas, the Society for the Advancement of Minority in STEM, Society of Women Engineers, and Women in Science and Engineering. To further market the event, SPS will work with our Student Government senator to ensure that students from all disciplines will also be aware of the event. It is anticipated that a minimum of 20 SPS members will attend and/or help market the event. At least one student from each of the partnering organizations will serve as a point-of-contact for their respective groups.

While we do not have a particular undergraduate member with expertise in planning an event exactly like this, we do have many members of the community who participated in the planning and hosting of the 2013 Southeastern CUWIP, which was held at UCF. The officers of SPS and Women in Physics have also planned many smaller events featuring guest speakers and moderating panels in a similar manner. With the support of our advisors and the department, we are confident that the event will be planned and brought to fruition effectively and professionally. We plan to host this event virtually via Zoom to allow for safety and broader participation.

Event Timeline

**October 2020 - April 2021**: Connect with other groups on campus and gain support for the event

**January 2021 - February 2021**: Confirm guest speaker

  - **Candidates**: Dr. Sheila Nash-Stevenson, Dr. Reva Williams, Dr. Jami Valentine

**February 2021 - April 2021**: Advertise the event, collect attendee information

**April 2021 - May 2021**: Host guest speaker event, review attendee feedback, post the event recording on the chapter website, submit Final Report to SPS National
Activity Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the success of the event, we will request that attendees fill out an intent to attend form at least one week before the event, as well as an attendance form at the time of the meeting. On the intent to attend form, we will take suggestions for questions to the speaker and provide background information on the selected speaker. At the beginning of the event, we will post a questionnaire to take note of who is in the audience, what their interests are, and what they hope to gain from the event. After the event, we will send out and evaluate a feedback survey from the attendees and ask whether or not they felt the event promoted physics across cultures.

In the final activity evaluation, we will include the meeting notes and questions asked, via Zoom post-meeting report. We also have the benefit of recording the event so that it can be accessed on the UCF SPS website for future viewing.

Budget Justification

For the proposed event, we request a total of $500.00 and we will not be requesting any monetary support from other sources. We would like to use the budget to provide a $500.00 honorarium for the guest speaker. Besides funds for the honorarium, we may request technical support which can be provided, free of charge, by the IT staff through the UCF and the Physics Department. All surveys and reports will use free online tools, or university-hosted survey platforms.

We feel strongly about compensating our guest speaker for their time and efforts through an honorarium and we believe that this action will help accomplish the goal of the Future Faces of Physics Award by supporting a physicist from a traditionally underrepresented group for their valuable time and insights.