

# St. John's University ΣΠΣ Chapter Induction Ceremony



Sigma Pi Sigma new inductees: Mr. Tariq Ramlall, Mr. Robert Thomas, Ms. Kimberly Singh, Mr. George Kunkel, and Mr. Taraqur Rahman. Inductee absent: Mr. Awais Ahmed.

St. John's University  
Jamaica, NY  
April 17, 2013

St. John's University Chapter of Sigma Pi Sigma held its annual Induction Ceremony on Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> of 2013 in the Sciarra Room in St. Albert Hall. In addition to inducting new members to Sigma Pi Sigma, the event aimed to connect physics alumni with current students through an egg drop contest, and alumni's sharing of their career experiences and contributions to various aspects of the society. Attendees of the event include: six physics alumni, around fifteen current students including five new inductees, about seven family members and friends of inductees, and six administrator/faculty members.

Our special alumni speakers of the event were: Mr. Robert Jakobsze, Global Head of Supervisory Controls, Barclays Bank; Mr. Kingsley Joseph (B.S., '10), Student of the Medical Physics M.S. Program at Columbia University; Ms. Emily Lavelle (B.S., '03), Attorney at The Law Offices of Dominick W. Lavelle; Mr. Al Meneses (B.S. '91), Financial Planner, the Forest Hills Financial Group (FHFG); Mr. Andrew Parkes (B.S., '04), Building Manager and Physics Adjunct Instructor; and Mr. Damon Urso, P.E. (B.S., '73), Project Manager, Nassau County Department of Public Works.



Alumni speakers include: (front row from left to right) Mr. Damon Urso, Mr. Kingsley Joseph, and Mr. Al Meneses; (back row from left to right) Mr. Robert Jakobsze and Mr. Andrew Parkes.

The event began with an egg drop contest, led by Spencer Mamer, President of St. John's University Chapter of Society of Physics Students. Students and alumni guests formed teams of 2-3 people and each team was provided with two eggs, paper and scotch tape to wrap them. All eggs were then dropped from a certain height onto a rock. The eggs that stayed intact after the impact were ranked according to their package size. The teams were very excited about the game and rushed into packaging the eggs. Although some eggs could not withstand the impact, five eggs actually survived and the smallest package size was 10.6 cm! As the winning teams were congratulated by the audience and received prizes, the fun brought by this game set a very joyful tone for the induction ceremony.



Students were wrapping eggs with paper and scotch tapes during the egg drop test.

The induction ceremony was opened by Dr. Huizhong Xu, faculty advisor of St. John's University Chapter of Society of Physics Students and Sigma Pi Sigma, who welcomed our physics alumni, inductees and their family members and friends, current students, faculty and administrators, and others in the audience. After presenting the mission and history of Sigma Pi Sigma and emphasizing the various roles that Sigma Pi Sigma plays in servicing our society, Dr. Huizhong Xu conducted the induction of new members. As the inductees' names were called, each inductee came forward to receive his or her membership certificate and ID card. The new inductees were congratulated by the audience with a big applause for their outstanding achievements. With the 2013 new inductees, St. John's Sigma Pi sigma Chapter reached a total of 52 members since its establishment in 1973. Dr. Xu congratulated all inductees and conducted

the charge to new members, and encouraged them to continue their commitment to honorable scholarship, to assist the development of interest in physics at all possible levels, to provide fellowship as traditional physicists or ‘hidden physicists’ to his or her professional community, and to offer their collective wisdom and perspective in the service of the larger society. In particular, he encouraged the new inductees with his personal motto: with physics, you can do anything!



Tariq Ramlall, a physics junior at St. John’s University, was inducted to Sigma Pi Sigma.

Following the induction ceremony, all attendees were invited to a buffet reception. During the reception, the students and the alumni guests held conversations in small groups to get to know each other, exchange thoughts on pursuing graduate study, and discuss career options for physics majors. The conversations were very friendly, positive, and stimulating. Many students felt the event provided them an excellent opportunity to network with our physics alumni, and realized the importance of networking and fellowship during their professional career.





Students and alumni were chatting during the buffet reception.

Following the buffet reception, our alumni guests were introduced by Dr. Xu to share their career experiences with our students. The event's first alumni speaker was Mr. Al Meneses, who graduated from St. John's University and Polytechnic University in 1991 with a dual B.S. degree in Physics and Aerospace Engineering. Al was a former NCAA Division I and professional soccer player and also worked as a soccer coach and sports trainer, and then made a transition to the financial industry. He first worked for the New York Life in Financial Services and is currently a Financial Representative for the Forest Hills Financial Group (FHFG). Al talked about his education background in physics and engineering, his career transition from a professional soccer player to a financial representative, and how some of the training he received as a physics student still matters in his job duties as a financial representative. Students were quite fascinated by his career story, and Al encouraged them to contact him for future internships and/or career opportunities in his firm.



Mr. Al Meneses (B.S. '91) was sharing his career experience with students.

Our second alumni speaker, Mr. Robert Jakobsze, is the Global Head of Supervisory Controls and Regulatory Reporting at the Barclays Investment Bank, Wealth, and Corporate Bank. He is responsible for the implementation of a strategic supervisory framework across all Markets Businesses as well as Regulatory Transaction Reporting globally. Robert received his B.S. in Physics from St. John's University, B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the New York Polytechnic University, and MBA from the New York Institute of Technology. After his 14 years of experience in software development and systems engineering in the utility and manufacturing industries, he then joined the Senior IT leadership team at the New York Stock Exchange where he headed Enterprise Systems Development. In his presentation, Robert talked about how his physics degree facilitated his career as an IT professional and how his math background and training in logic and reasoning helped him in completing his MBA degree. He attributed his career success to his multifaceted education background and his commitment to being a lifelong learner, encouraged our students to do the same.



Mr. Robert Jakobsze, a physics alumnus, was sharing his career experience with students.

Our third alumni speaker is Mr. Andrew Parkes. Andrew received his B.S. in physics from St. John's University in 2004. He currently works as a building manager and also as an adjunct instructor in our department. Andrew made a strong point in his presentation that physics can be useful even in his daily work as a building manager. He discussed this from two perspectives: first, the kind of "how stuff works" knowledge taught in physics classes helped him better understand how the mechanical, thermal, and electrical parts of a building work; second, the way of thinking and reasoning taught in physics helped him to become a better problem solver.



Mr. Andrew Parkes (B.S., '04) was sharing his career experience with students.

Our next alumni speaker, Ms. Emily Lavelle, talked about her experience of how physics has helped her legal career. Emily received her B.S. in Physics and J.D. from St. John's University in 2003 and 2006 respectively and is currently an attorney at The Law Offices of Dominick W. Lavelle. She shared with the audience that the physics way of thinking and analyzing things she learned as a physics student played an important role in her career success. She expressed her gratitude to her physics professors and classmates at St. John's for an extraordinary education and fellowship she had. She suggested our current students to cherish this bonding and keep it strong many years after their graduation from St. John's University.





Ms. Emily Lavelle (B.S., '03) was sharing his career experience with students.

The next alumni speaker was Mr. Damon Urso, who received his B.S. in Pre-Engineering and MBA from St. John's, and M.S. in Civil Engineering from the Polytechnic University. He is currently a Project Manager for Design Projects for the Nassau County Department of Public Works, Water and Wastewater Engineering Unit. In his presentation, he compared the education cost and the engineering job market of the 70's with those of the present time, and encouraged our students to be well-prepared and explore all networking opportunities in their job search. He also talked about the impact of the Super-storm Sandy on the water treatment system in the Nassau County and how simple physics and engineering can be applied in designing projects. He brought brochures that provide information on the current trends in the civil engineering job market and the civil engineering companies in the New York metropolitan area, and encouraged our students to contact him if he can offer any help and career advice for them.



Mr. Damon Urso, P.E. (B.S., '73) was sharing his engineering career experience with students.

Our last alumni speaker of the evening was Mr. Kingsley Joseph. Kingsley graduated with his B.S. degree in Physical Science with a concentration in Biomedical Engineering from St. John's University in 2010, and just received his Master's degree in Biomedical Engineering from NYU-Poly in January 2013. He is currently studying at Columbia University pursuing a Master's degree in Medical Physics with a concentration on therapeutics as well as nuclear medicine imaging. He talked about how he was able to persevere and succeed academically with the help of the St. John's community and professors of the physics department after taking a medical leave of absence. He shared with the audience some general information about the Medical Physics M.S. Program he is currently in and highlighted the advantages of his physics and math background in his current study. Some of our current students were very interested in the Medical Physics Program and asked Kingsley a number of questions regarding the program's job prospect and requirements of admission to the program. The audience gave Kingsley a big applause for his presentation and achievements!



Mr. Kinsley Joseph (B.S., '10) was speaking about his graduate study experience.

At the end of our alumni presentations, Dr. Xu presented each guest speaker a Certificate of Appreciation and a gift to thank them for taking time out of their busy schedule to come to St. John's and to inspire our physics students. Dr. Xu concluded the ceremony by encouraging all students to get the most out of their St. John's education and keep open-minded regarding what they can do with a physics degree! He also thanked everyone who came to attend the induction ceremony and acknowledged the generous support from the SPS National Office and St. John's University that made the event possible and a great success!

**Expenses:**

Food, Beverage, and Utensils:	\$541.81
Certificates and Gifts for Alumni:	\$243.88
Prizes for the Egg Drop Contest:	\$140.36

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Total: \$926.05



Students were wrapping eggs in paper.



Family members of inductees were wrapping eggs in paper.





Students were displaying their egg packages.



Students were displaying their egg packages.





Teams were waiting for their egg packages to be tested.



A moment of truth!



Oh, this one is broken!



Happy to be a winning team and get a prize!



Happy to be a new inductee of Sigma Pi Sigma!



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Students and alumni were chatting during the buffet reception.



A token of appreciation for our alumni speaker.