



SPS President Candidates 2019-20 National Council

Ballots Due: May 1, 2019

For more details, visit:

<https://www.spsnational.org/about/governance/national-council/nominations-elections>

Zone: Zone-14

Position: SPS President

Name: Alina Gearba-Sell

Chapter: United States Air Force Academy

Biography: Dr. Alina Gearba-Sell is an Associate Professor in the Department of Physics at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) and faculty advisor of the USAFA chapters of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) and Sigma Pi Sigma, the Physics Honor Society. She currently serves as President of the National Society of Physics Students and previously served as SPS Zone 10 Councilor for 6 years representing SPS chapters from Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and western Tennessee. Dr. Gearba received her Ph.D. in Physics from Polytechnic University of Bucharest in Romania. She furthered her knowledge in physics at Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen, Denmark and in the United States at Colorado State University and Kansas State University. Prior to joining the USAFA faculty, Dr. Gearba was a faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), where she was inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma. Dr. Gearba has been an active contributor to her research field, with many presentations, publications and grants. She has been recognized with several awards, including the Frank J. Seiler Award for Research Excellence in the Basic Sciences and Civilian of the Year by USAFA, the Mentoring Award and Student Organization Advisor of the Year by USM.

Candidate Statement: I have been involved with SPS for almost 15 years and I truly believe I missed out during my undergraduate career in Romania not having the support of a national student organization. Therefore, I made a life-long commitment to the SPS mission of “helping students transform themselves into contributing members of the professional community.” It was a rewarding experience to serve as SPS Zone 10 Councilor and I am honored to continue serving the Society as its President. During my tenure as President, I have served on scholarship and awards committees and chaired SPS Executive Committee meetings. In addition, I performed the installation ceremony for two new Sigma Pi Sigma chapters, gave an invited talk at an American Physical Society regional meeting raising awareness of SPS programs and represented SPS at the American Institute of Physics Board of Directors meeting. Service is an essential component of what membership in SPS means; however SPS does not have a service award to recognize those who went above and beyond to further the SPS mission. If re-elected President, I will work with the SPS National Director on drafting a service award to recognize both students and faculty advisors for their contributions to the Society and its members. I will continue working on increasing the communication between the local chapters and the National Office as well as recommending new initiatives designed to enrich your undergraduate experience.

Local/Regional Involvement: Dr. Gearba-Sell has been advising the USAFA chapters of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma since 2014. She previously served as faculty advisor of the USM SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma chapters for 9 years. Both USAFA and USM SPS chapters received their first Outstanding SPS Chapter Award under Dr. Gearba’s leadership. The USM chapter continued to receive the Outstanding Chapter Award for six additional years, while USAFA received its fourth. Several Future Faces of Physics, Marsh White, Chapter Research, Student Research and Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Projects Awards (12 between the two chapters) were also received under her leadership. In addition, both USAFA and USM SPS chapters hosted their first SPS Zone Meeting during Dr. Gearba’s tenure as faculty advisor. She hosted Physics Nobel Laureate Eric Cornell twice arranging several informal meetings with the SPS students. Dr.

Gearba accompanied 11 USAFA and 5 USM SPS members to their first Physics Congress in 2016 and 2008, respectively. She also accompanied 5 USAFA SPS members on a cultural immersion trip to Switzerland. Dr. Gearba was instrumental in installing the USAFA Sigma Pi Sigma chapter in 2014 and resurrecting the USM Sigma Pi Sigma chapter in 2008.

National Involvement: Dr. Gearba-Sell is honored to currently serve as SPS President, having previously served in the SPS National Council as faculty representative of SPS chapters from Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and western Tennessee (SPS Zone 10 Councilor). As council member, she chaired the “Underrepresented Groups in Physics” committee tasked with drafting the SPS Future Faces of Physics Award designed to promote physics across cultures. Dr. Gearba also chaired the “Undergraduate Research” committee tasked with evaluating the SPS programs, activities and initiatives aimed at encouraging undergraduate research. In addition, she served as chair of the “Long-Range Vision” committee tasked with brainstorming ideas regarding the 50th anniversary of SPS and 100th anniversary of Sigma Pi Sigma. Dr. Gearba served on the planning committee for the 2016 Quadrennial Physics Congress held in San Francisco. With an attendance of about 1200 students, faculty and alumni, the congress was perhaps the largest conference in the world aimed primarily at engaging physics undergraduates. Dr. Gearba is currently chairing a committee charged with exploring potential avenues to celebrate the 2021 Centennial of Sigma Pi Sigma, including events for chapters to hold locally.

Presidential Experience: Dr. Gearba-Sell has been serving as President of the SPS National Council, the governing body of the Society of Physics Students and Sigma Pi Sigma for the past 2 years. In her capacity as SPS President, Dr. Gearba chaired the SPS Executive Committee meetings, presided over in-person and virtual meetings of the SPS National Council and represented SPS at the American Institute of Physics Board of Directors meeting. She has worked closely with the SPS National Director and the Sigma Pi Sigma President on various SPS related issues and would be grateful for the opportunity to use the experience she gained so far for the betterment of the undergraduate community. Dr. Gearba previously served as Chair of the Physics and Engineering Division of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) and attended several board meetings working with her fellow colleagues on promoting science in the state of Mississippi.

Zone: Zone-2

Position: SPS President

Name: Michael 'Bodhi' Rogers

Chapter: Ithaca College

Biography: Professor Rogers received undergraduate degrees in physics and mathematics from SUNY Geneseo, Masters degrees in Physics and Archaeology from Oregon State University, and his Ph.D. in Physics from Oregon State University. He is currently a full professor of physics at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY and a Registered Professional Archaeologist. His scholarly interests are focused on Education Research, Science Teacher Preparation, Geophysical Archaeology, and Historic Preservation using Laser Scanning. Notable accomplishments have been creating a fully 3D record of President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington D.C. where Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation by taking positional readings every 5 mm inside and outside of the house using a laser scanner. Professor Rogers and his students have also fully digitized Trim Castle; the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland.

Candidate Statement: As the President of SPS I plan on providing leadership to the society to help all members, the staff, and the national council achieve the SPS purpose and mission. SPS is a leader in ensuring all students can see themselves as a member of the physics community. What it means to be a physicist and a member of the physics community today is very different than it was decades ago. As SPS President I will work with the SPS leadership team and National Council to ensure that SPS works to make being a member of the physics community welcoming and supportive.

Local/Regional Involvement: When I joined the Ithaca College Physics Department in 2003 I established a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter and rejuvenated our SPS Chapter as their new chapter advisor. Our SPS chapter is now comprised of the on-campus physics club and engineering club (we get twice the money from our Student Government Association with this configuration) and we've received Outstanding Chapter Awards every year since. Our Ithaca College SPS Chapter routinely secures funds to send 8-12 students per year to the APS March Meeting and additional funds to send students to meetings such as AAPT, AAAS, and regional meetings such as NYS-APS and the Zone 2 meeting. I've also served on the executive board of the New York State Section of the American Physics Society for the past decade and served a term as chair of the society. The NYSS APS has a focus on undergraduate physics major participation in their biannual symposium. In my role on the executive board I advocated for better connections to SPS Zone 2 activities and we've been piloting a Zone 2 meeting coordinated with one of the NYSS-APS symposia.

National Involvement: I've been the Zone 2 Councilor for the past five years. Serving on the SPS National Council has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career. It is rewarding to be part of a governing body where nearly half of the voting members are undergraduate physics majors. Being part of these physics majors' growth while being part of a governance body is rewarding. The dedication of the zone councilors, associate zone councilors, and SPS Staff is humbling. We all work so well together to make SPS better. In 2017 I was deeply honored to receive the SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor award. This award has a long history of impressive chapter advisors and joining them with this award was transformative. I remember joining SPS as an undergraduate student. I remember being inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma. These events have stayed with me throughout my career. It has been pure joy to share these experiences with new members of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma.

Presidential Experience: I have served on the SPS National Council for the past five years. I've spent 15 years as a member of the New York State Archaeological Association Finger Lakes Chapter with most of those years as Vice President. I've been on the Executive Board of the New York State Section of the American Physics Society of the past 15 years and was the chair for two-year-long term. I've been the vice-president of the Ithaca College School of Humanities and Sciences Faculty Senate. I've also served three years as a trustee on the Ithaca College Board of Trustees. I'm currently a member of the executive board of the Cayuga Trails Conference as the lead editor of the Trails Guide. I've also been the Coordinator of the Ithaca College Science Teaching Program where I've exceeded the original goal of our National Science Foundation Noyce grant of 1.2 million dollars to recruit 18 Science and Mathematics teachers to teach in high-needs school by recruiting 38 new highly qualified science and mathematics teachers. I also have experience visiting Capitol Hill to advocate for funding and support of science, science education, and hiking trails.