



# CHAPTER BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

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[www.spsnational.org/  
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## INTERNAL CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Internal chapter activities focus on the well-being of your SPS chapter. The following suggestions can be implemented to help strengthen your chapter's health.

### • Mental Health Awareness

To maintain a healthy SPS chapter, it is important to focus on the mind. Have information about services available to students and plans to set up for a more in-depth presentation on the struggles faced by STEM students and coping mechanisms.

*Examples: Mental Health Presentation, Yoga, Meditation, Coloring, hikes, and off campus meals*

### • Peer Mentorship Program

To increase recruitment and retention in your SPS chapter, it is important to build a strong physics community. Setting up a peer mentoring system such as pairing an upperclassman with a lowerclassman can help form a well-integrated physics community.

### • Communication through Social Media

Creating a social media presence for your SPS chapter can help all of your members stay updated on meetings and events. This can also be used to remind members about SPS National opportunities including scholarships, awards, internships, etc. Forming a social media platform for alumni can help members see what alumni are doing with their physics knowledge.

*Examples: Facebook, GroupMe, Slack, LinkedIn (especially useful for alumni connection), Instagram*



A Peer Mentorship Program in action at John Carroll University SPS chapter.



Coe Physics club members at the 2018 annual physics holiday party with professors.

## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Interactions with the community on campus is an essential part of every SPS chapter to strengthen member relations and student cooperation, recruit new members, and help with member retention. Here are a few suggestions to keep your local chapter of SPS engaged:

### • Annual Holiday Parties

Holiday seasons are the perfect time to bring the campus community together which allows everyone to interact freely and make connections in an informal environment.

*Examples: Holiday party with "Physics Carols", Thanksgiving party focusing on "Gratitude", Welcome back or End of semester BBQ*

### • Campus-Wide Scavenger Hunt

Adopting fun and interesting games to keep the campus community involved in SPS activities helps strengthen the chapter in terms of new membership and overall chapter wellness.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Performing community outreach events is a core value of SPS. Outreach is a tool to promote professionalism in students and encourage the public community to invest in physics and STEM. The suggestions below are specific events a few chapters have done for community outreach.

### • Physics Food Truck For the Physics Mind

The Physics Food Truck for the Physics Mind by TeachSpin houses a number of intermediate and advanced demos for many different branches of physics. Their demos can be found on their website and can be used to build an intermediate lab workshop for young students. For more information, visit [www.teachspin.com/food-truck-for-the-physics-mind](http://www.teachspin.com/food-truck-for-the-physics-mind).

### • Science Day

A Science Day is an all-day event to showcase the wonders of STEM to budding scientists in the community. Other student organizations and science departments on campus can be involved to make a student run event.

*Examples: Themed Demos Show (e.g. Acoustics, Astronomy), Observation Night, Workshops (e.g. How to make an Electric Motor, Bridge Building Competition)*

### • Sigma Pi Sigma / Alumni Day

Host an outreach event on campus or off campus with the help of alumni.

## ΣΠΣ & ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Connect with alumni, both of your chapter and in Sigma Pi Sigma, for professional development opportunities, arrange speaking engagements at your next chapter or zone meeting, shadow someone in a field of interest, learn more about a career path, and so much more!

### • Careers in Physics

Have a panel or guest speaker once a month to discuss career topics. Invite your alumni to these events and utilize the SPS Alumni Engagement Program.

### • SPS Chapters Alumni database

Where are they now? Being able to answer this question may help a student with their career pathway. It may be helpful to find a method to keep an updated database of alumni connections in a google form for graduates to complete (work with the department chair to get contact information).

### • Maintain Strong Connections

Invite alumni to SPS activities (Sigma Pi Sigma Induction dinners; Outreach events, off campus tours).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development can assist students to prepare for after graduation. An SPS chapter which helps to assist in this can help to maintain prepared students who feel as though they can succeed.

### • Professional Development Workshops

To give students opportunities to learn about different skills necessary to apply to graduate school or jobs. This allows students to develop the skills they will need in an approachable environment.

*Examples: CV/resume writing, interview practice, personal statement writing, internships, Careers Toolbox workshops*

### • GRE Study Sessions

Give students an opportunity to form a group to study for the physics GRE. This can include a wide variety of study materials such as problem sets and information on test taking strategies.



A peer mentorship program in action at the John Carroll University SPS chapter.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

SPS is dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion in chapter organization including race, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, family and socioeconomic status, or cultural background. The following suggestions are different ideas on how to bring awareness to diversity and inclusion.

### • Diversity/Inclusion Panel

To help bring awareness and discussion, having a diversity/inclusion panel can open students to ideas on how to be more inclusive and accepting. Panels can be led by students, professors, professionals, or a combination.

*Example Topics: How to be an Ally, Inclusive Leadership, History of Diversity/Inclusion in Science*

### • Diversity/Inclusion Conferences

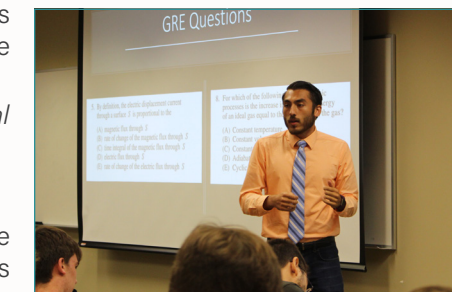
Attending conferences promotes chapter cohesiveness during travel and conference events. Diversity and inclusion conferences help focus discussion of chapters on how to be more inclusive.

*Examples: NSBP, SACNAS, CU2MiP, and CUWiP Conferences*

### • Collaborative Events

Working with other student groups on campus for collaboration events helps create a chapter environment that would be more inclusive to all types of people. These events do not have to be physics based.

*Examples: All Science Picnic, Video Game Tournament, Bake-Sale*



SPS Chapter discussing questions found on the physics GRE at the University of Central Florida.



A liquid-nitrogen-filled pumpkin falls 12 stories in celebration of the hundred year anniversary of physics and astronomy at Washington State University. Photo care of Kai Eiselein of Moscow-Pullman Daily News.