



# SIGMA PI SIGMA

The physics honor society

## Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Project Award Proposal

---

<b>Project Proposal Title</b>	2025-26 Sigma Pi Sigma Induction Ceremony: current students, alumni and guests
<b>Name of School</b>	The University of Tennessee – Chattanooga
<b>Sigma Pi Sigma Chapter Number</b>	007
<b>Total Amount Requested</b>	\$600.00

### Abstract

UT-Chattanooga plans a special induction ceremony. We will induct our current outstanding students and our outstanding alumni, who did not get inducted during the 20-years “induction gap” at UTC, while inviting representatives from a nearby university without a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter to educate them about the Physics Honor Society.

# Proposal Statement

## Overview of Proposed Project

University of Tennessee-Chattanooga chapters of Sigma Pi Sigma and the Society of Physics Students are planning a very special induction ceremony for the 2025-26 academic year.

Our Sigma Pi Sigma chapter has a very long history with the society: it was started as chapter #7 in the US, with first inductions happening on May 17, 1929. Over the years we have inducted over 350 outstanding individuals. However, between years of 1997 and 2017, for some reason, there were no inductions, even though the department awarded the Sigma Pi Sigma internal award regularly. We do not know why and how this has happened, and we will probably never find out, given that the previous chapter adviser retired in 2020, and all SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma activities were shut down during COVID pandemic, 2020-22. Since COVID, we have been able to revive our chapter and have had three successful inductions (7 new members). One of our chapter projects is Sigma Pi Sigma Genealogy Project: we try to find and connect to our alumni and have them share insights from their life and professional experiences with current students and participate in our activities. It really brings the sense of community and continuation to our chapter. The “oldest” alumni we were able to connect to so far is Dr. James Pitts, who graduated from our department in 1995 and is a “hidden physicist” – a professor of biology at the Utah State University.

For this academic year, we plan a very special induction: besides current outstanding undergraduates, we plan to induct some of the alumni that did not get their chance in the 20-year induction gap. We hope that among them will be Dr. Marian Axiente (UTC’2007), assistant professor of Medial Physics at Emory University in Atlanta, GA; Dr. Jeremy Watts (UTC’2016), a Data Scientist, and hopefully several others. **The event will involve ~ 40 people.** We are planning a festive induction ceremony and a dinner to celebrate our students and alumni. It will honor outstanding scholarship, strengthen our chapter’s ties with our alumni and foster a sense of fellowship. We believe that bringing our outstanding alumni into the Sigma Pi Sigma organization will promote their involvement and service to our physics community. They will be invaluable resource for our current students in programs like Sigma Pi Sigma mentorship in the future.

Additionally, we plan to highlight the event on campus and especially around the newly established UTC Quantum Center to expand the recognition of Sigma Pi Sigma within this organization which will help our chapter in the future. We also plan to invite local alumni who are already Sigma Pi Sigma members to celebrate new inductees.

Also, this year we developed connections with SPS Chapter from Southern Adventist University, a nearby institution. It is a smaller university, and they do not have a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter. We plan to invite representatives from that chapter to our induction ceremony, show them what the Physics Honor Society is about, and help them start their own chapter.

## How Proposed Project Meets the Purpose of the Award

The 2025-2026 alumni and current student induction project aims to engage alumni and expand the recognition of Sigma Pi Sigma within our department, UTC’s campus, UTC’s Quantum Center, and Southern Adventist University. We plan to induct 3 or 4 current students and possibly 3 or 4 alumni. This will help us to recognize our outstanding current and former students at the chapter and universtiy level, build community among alumni and local Sigma Pi Sigma members, as well as strengthen ties with the Southern Adventist University SPS chapter and help them to establish a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter.

## Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project

The preparation for inductions will start in February of 2026.

**Project leader:** Olivia Ziemer, Sigma Pi Sigma member since December 2024.

1. Qualified students and alumni will be confirmed. Invitations for induction will be sent through the Sigma Pi Sigma web site. (*Chapter advisor*)
2. To organize for the event we will need to do the following. *All SPS chapter members will be involved (around 30 students), including 5 Sigma Pi Sigma current members.*
  - identify the venue (University Center or the Quantum Center);
  - send invitations to current students, prospective inductees, local alumni, and friends;
  - plan the venue decorations highlighting our students' accomplishments and the SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma chapters activities and current projects. This will help to promote interest in physics in the local community and hopefully will help with recruitment for the Physics Department.
  - Create a powerpoint presentation with names and biographies of the prospective inductees highlighting their outstanding scholarship and service to others,
  - plan the dinner and order catering;
  - Identify the dinner speaker (possibly the director of the Quantum Center, Vice Chancellor for Research at UTC or one of the alumni);
  - Plan the other activities during the ceremony, such as games and music.
  - Plan the take-down and clean-up.
3. Once the event is planned, we will send out a mass notification to the UTC physics department advertising the event and providing a link to RSVP. We will directly contact alumni eligible to be inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma to provide event details and formally invite them to the ceremony. At this time we will also reach out to Southern Adventist University, formally inviting their SPS chapter representatives to attend.
4. After the event, we will submit an article to the weekly UTC-wide newsletter, Departmental newsletter, and the Quantum Center newsletter and possibly to the local newspaper to increase the local awareness of the Physics Honor Society (*chapter members and advisor*). The photographs from the event will be posted on the Departmental Canvas page and on Departmental social media (*Department*). We will also send an evaluation survey to people who attended asking them for suggestions and improvements for future events (*all participants*).

## Project Timeline

February- March, 2026 – Send inductions invitations through the Sigma Pi Sigma web site

February – April, 2026 - Plan and organize the ceremony (see above)

April 24, 2026 – Induction ceremony

May 31, 2026 – Final report to the SPS National and Sigma Pi Sigma

## Project Evaluation Plan

The project will be evaluated based on the attendance record and feedback from attendees. The information about the event will be disseminated through several different news channels to engage the local community, increase the awareness about the Sigma Pi Sigma, and foster interest in Physics. Long-term success of this project will be evaluated based on future collaboration between UT-Chattanooga and Southern Adventist University's SPS communities.

## Budget Justification

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Setting up the room with tables and chairs	\$60	Generally, UTC charges for room setting for the events
Room decorations (posters, etc.)	\$40	We can print posters in the Chattanooga Public Library, which is rather economical.
Dinner: food and non-alcoholic beverages for 40 people at \$25/person	\$1000	Catering estimate for Aramark (UTC food contractor). The dinner will happen after the induction ceremony and will promote fellowship.
Total	\$1100	
<b>Requested from this grant</b>	<b>\$600</b>	The rest will be covered by the Physics Department.