SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS
An organization of the American Institute of Physics

Marsh W. White Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	Future Stars see Past Stars!
Name of School	Davidson College
SPS Chapter Number	1486
Total Amount Requested	$500.00

Abstract

In April 2026, we will do a State-wide Star Party at Davidson College, where for over 200 people, primarily children (Future Stars) around the area, we will do a Star Party event with workshops, a lecture, and a stargazing event (Past Stars) with small telescopes. This is our previous year:
https://sites.google.com/davidson.edu/davidsonstarparty2025/home

Proposal Statement

The entire Proposal Statement should be no more than 2 pages, and organized as follows.

Overview of Proposed Project/Activity/Event

This project will be an outreach event for people, especially children in North Carolina for them to get interested in physics and astronomy through exhibitions, a public lecture, and a stargazing event with telescopes. We have done this event in the past with good success, but the lack of budget has made it difficult for us to manage over 200 people (and especially children) on campus, have enough exhibitions, and have the resources to recruit enough volunteers for the stargazing event. This project aims to build interest in physics and astronomy for children, for the general public to care more about physics and astronomy, and for them to learn more about what is happening in the night sky. The target audience is the public with usually less or beginner-level knowledge in physics and astronomy, and also children.

The project is another step in Davidson College SPS Chapter's commitment to outreach events. Usually twice a year, we participate in or conduct an event for cool physics demonstrations, Moon Party, or stargazing events. However, this year as our budget as SPS was not increased by the Davidson College Student Activities Office, and that because of our new ideas and events conducted such as colloquiums, a Physics Students Snack Bar, and so on, continuing with organizing the annual Stargazing Party is important.

How Proposed Activity Promotes Interest in Physics

This project will be promoted around Davidson, Mooresville, and other small cities around Davidson. We will also promote it on our social media, and even try to promote it on the Davidson College social media accounts. On our previous Physics and Astronomy related events, we were able to gather over 200 people, and we want this event to be our highest attended event yet. By doing cool physics demonstrations, having a public lecture for people to learn about physics and astronomy, and doing a stargazing event with information on our night sky, this is a great event for people to build interest, and get curious about physics, even maybe for the first time for children, and realize how cool physics is. It is appropriate for a Marsh W. White Award, as it is directly aligned with its goal, and does it on a large scale.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project/Activity/Event

Me (Hakan Bora Yavuzkara), Dr. Anthony Kuchera, and Dr. Kristen Thompson will be on charge for this event.

- This project will be marketed on the Davidson College SPS Instagram, the Davidson College Instagram, via posters on the campus, via posters around Davidson, Mooresville, and Huntersville. We will also promote it to our SPS Newsletter.

- We are expecting all 5 of our SPS Board, and our two advisors to volunteer, and we plan to gather 10-15 more volunteers from the SPS Newsletter, the physics classes, and the astronomy classes. We will also be open to volunteers from other departments.
- Dr. Thompson and Dr. Kuchera will ensure our success by finding a great public lecture speaker. Also, me and a few other members have volunteered in this event last year, so with access to other devices and demonstrations, we will be able to answer questions about astronomy and physics.

Project/Activity/Event Timeline

Before February 15, 2025

- **We will reach out to professors and science communicators to find someone who would be happy to give a beginner-level public lecture on astronomy and physics.**

March 7, 2025

- **The promotion of the event starts, with the promotional posters and Instagram posts made**
- **Until March 21, 2025, we will keep on with the promotions, and hanging up posters, and hope to have all of them stay up until the event. We will also advertise it on the School Newspaper/Magazine, and also the screens on campus.**
- **For the advertisements that are done on campus, we will also include a QR Code to ask for volunteers, and plan to gather at least 10-15 extra volunteers for different events.**
- **We will also be going to Physics and Astronomy classes to promote the event, as well as to ask for volunteers.**

March 28, 2025

- **The final volunteer team is determined, and the specific sections of the event they will be volunteering for is chosen.**
- **The exhibitions and workshops to be made are completed and stored.**
- **We are hoping the official Davidson College Social Media Accounts will promote the event on this day.**

April 4, 2025 (Stargazing Party)

- **5:00 pm - 6:00 pm**
  - **The exhibitions and workshops will be set out**
- **6:00 pm - 8:00 pm (EVENT STARTS)**
  - **We are expecting 200-300+ people to show up**
  - **Workshops and Exhibitions are demonstrated**
- **8:00 pm - 9:00 pm (Public Lecture)**
  - **A public lecture will be held for the attendees**
  - **Volunteers will be set in places to show people around to the hall**
  - **In the meantime, some volunteers will be setting up the telescopes outside.**
- **9:00 pm - 10:30 pm (Stargazing Party)**

- **Telescopes will be set outside pointing at certain celestial objects in the night sky, changing their targeted object every 30 minutes or so.**
- **Volunteers will also be showing people the visible planets and important constellations that can be seen with the naked eye.**

Activity Evaluation Plan

This is already an event that has proved success from the past, but this year, we need more budget to conduct it as the Student Activities Office budget for the SPS has not been enough to fund all of the other events and the Physics Students Snack Bar that we are doing. We have a website for the previous year: https://sites.google.com/davidson.edu/davidsonstarparty2025/home, and will do so again this year. Also, last year, we did not have enough resources or time to promote the event, but we still had 150+ people show up. This year, with better promoting and advertising, and by gathering more volunteers as well as collaborating with Davidson College itself, we hope to reach 300+ attendees. Most of these attendees are children, so it will be extremely beneficial for them to be introduced to physics and astronomy, and maybe even gain enough interest or curiosity on it for it to be a part of their life.
We will be evaluating the success of this activity by tracking how many people were there, how many people engaged with the workshops and exhibitions, how many people attended the public lecture, and how many other people were there for the Stargazing Party. We will also have a survey out for quick feedback from the participants. Another thing to evaluate will be to see how long after the Stargazing Party ends will people be there to use the telescopes and look at the night sky, as it would indicate that the interest remained until the end, and people wanted to do more with astronomy.

Budget Justification

We will be printing big, colored posters with high quality paper for them to even last outside, and with there being rain. As we will put them up around Davidson, and other small cities as well (for places we are allowed and by asking nicely in shops/restaurants). For this, we will need to print around 60 posters with each of them costing around 2 dollars.

As the event lasts a long time between 6 pm and around 11 pm, we will have people and children getting hungry, but unable to leave the event. For this reason, we will have snack buckets for whoever needs to eat which will periodically get out to hand to people. We plan to do these 4 rounds, and with quick and small snacks that should cost 20 dollars per bucket. We will get a public lecturer who is living close to North Carolina and has experience/research in Astronomy and science communication. For this, we estimate a price for their travel and a price for their lecture to cost approximately 300 dollars. This lecture will be very important for people and children who don't have much

knowledge in astronomy to learn about cool knowledge, and also get more invested in astronomy. For this, we need a great public lecturer.