

AIP | Matters

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Director's Matters

Guest column by Sean Bentley, SPS/Sigma Pi Sigma Director, and Aline McNaull, Policy Associate



SPS goes to Washington

In March, ten Society of Physics Students undergraduate members joined hundreds of other researchers, educators, and STEM leaders from AAS, APS, AVS, and many other organizations for this year's Science, Engineering, and Technology Congressional Visit Days (SET CVD). In all, nearly 2,000 meetings with congressional offices representing almost every state were held during this annual STEM convergence on Capitol Hill. The students had an intense, two-day introduction to the world of advocacy. After just one day of training on how to get the most out of a Congressional visit, they spent the second day speaking on behalf of the scientific community. The students spoke about issues important to all of us in science, but in terms personal to them that could make the issues real to the politicians.



SPS interns who participated in Congressional Visits Day. From the left - Kearns Louis-Jean (Xavier University of Louisiana), Simon Patané (Vassar College), Caleb Heath (University of Arkansas graduate; high school teacher), Robyn Smith (Drexel University), Cameron Caligan (Georgia Institute of Technology), Kevin Cheriyan (University of Maryland), and Aman Gill (Sonoma State University). Photo by Sean Bentley.

Having students participate in SET CVD for the second straight year is a key element of SPS's commitment to promoting active engagement in policy. SPS believes that an important part of its

mission to help students transform into professionals is exposing them to the many facets of a life in science—research, teaching, outreach, policy, service, and beyond. The policy area is one that is perhaps easy to overlook, but one that SPS takes very seriously and pursues in many ways. With the generous support of Nobel laureate John Mather, SPS has hosted two undergraduate students each summer starting in 2011 to serve as policy interns on Capitol Hill. The SPS National Council gives students a direct chance to engage in policy of the Society, with 18 student representatives elected from universities across the country. The most recent issue of *The SPS Observer* (Winter 2014-2015) focused on science policy, urging students to become more engaged in the political process. Instilling these ideas while they are undergraduates will give long-term benefit to the STEM community

[Read more.](#)

Physics Resources Matters

Inside Science tackles the state of Alzheimer's

Earlier this month, Inside Science (IS) ran a [three-part series](#) on Alzheimer's disease and the current state of research and treatment written by IS contributor Joel Shurkin. Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, according to the latest US government data, and the rank may be even higher, as death certificates may underreport the number of cases. The cost of treating the disease in the US was \$200 billion in 2010. Countries with aging populations, such as Japan and the US, will be hit particularly hard with new cases in coming years.

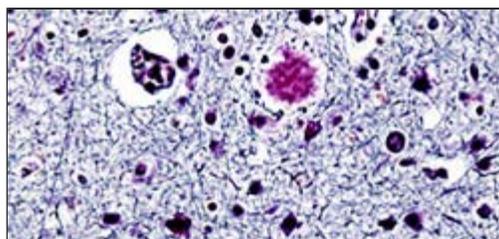


Image credit: wikicommons <http://bit.ly/19K7aB0>

[Read more.](#)

Strength in numbers

The AIP Government Relations (GR) team is working with other scientific societies, university groups and high-technology corporations in coalitions to advocate for strong funding levels for federal research and development issues. The physics societies have coordinated meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss basic versus applied research funding and have discussed the implications of agency initiatives on physical science research.

[Read more.](#)

Coming Up

April 11-14

- APS April Meeting (Baltimore, MD)

April 14

- AIP All Staff meeting; lunch included. 11am-1pm (College Park)

April 14-5

- AIP Management Retreat (Annapolis, MD)

April 16

- L.S. Trimble Science Heritage Lecture given by Lillian Hoddeson of the University of Illinois, “Stanford Ovshinsky and the Creation of the Nickel Metal Hydride Battery” (College Park)

April 17

- AIP milk-and-cookies social (College Park)

April 21

- ACP Art Reception introducing the next exhibit: “Flow” (College Park)

April 21-23

- STM Spring Conference (Washington, DC)

May 5

- AIP Cinco de Mayo social (College Park)

May 6

- ACP Blood Drive, 10am-3pm (College Park)

May 10-15

- CLEO 2015 (San Jose, CA)

May 13

- Birthday celebrations (College Park and Melville)

May 18-22

- ASA 169th Meeting (Pittsburgh, PA)