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Director's Matters

By Catherine O'Riordan, vice president, Physics Resources



Lisa Randall honored with the AIP Gemant Award

"What's so small to you is so large to me." Harvard professor Lisa Randall borrows this phrase from songwriter Suzanne Vega to help explain what the study of very small things (particles) can tell us about the largest things (the cosmos). Randall's expertise in communicating scientific concepts to the public through things with which we are all familiar—such as maps and landmarks—is part of what led AIP to recognize her with the [2012 Gemant Award](#). The prize is given annually to promote significant contributions to the cultural, artistic, or humanistic dimension of physics.

Randall, a theoretical physicist from Harvard University, is known for her pioneering work exploring extra spatial dimensions. But her work extends far beyond the science itself. The award committee recognized her for "excellence in research and her extraordinary public outreach through popular books, colloquia, public lectures, and television interviews that has increased public awareness of physics and cosmology and has made her a role model for future scientists and science communicators."



I had the pleasure of presenting the award to Randall during the APS April Meeting in Denver, CO. On April 15, Randall delivered her Gemant public lecture to an enthusiastic audience of 250 people at the University of Denver. Her talk, "Truth and Beauty, and Other Scientific Misconceptions," drew from her rich resume that spans physics and art.

Randall guided the audience through what physicists have learned to date in particle physics that may lead to discoveries of new dimensions. She shared her enthusiasm about potential discoveries at the Large Hadron Collider, and acknowledged that the theories

she works on are only valid if they fit the data that they hope to collect at CERN. Her two books, *Warped Passages: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe's Hidden Dimensions*, and *Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World*, expand on these ideas.

Randall also spoke about her work in the art–science connection, treating the audience to an excerpt of the opera that she collaborated with French musicians to create: "Hypermusic: A Projective Opera in Seven Planes." She explained how she came to write the libretto and work closely with the musicians to create an appealing production with "more physics" than she had hoped to ever get across to the public. She also shared images of artists' work that she curated for the exhibit "Measure for Measure" at the Los Angeles Arts Association.

After her lecture, Randall stayed on to answer audience questions, sign books, and then attend a student reception hosted by the University of Denver Physics & Astronomy Department. The size of the audience spoke to the public's enthusiasm to learn about the frontier science. The Andrew Gemant Award is made possible by a bequest of Andrew Gemant to the American Institute of Physics.

Special thanks to the University of Denver Physics & Astronomy Department—in particular, Jennifer Hoffman, Sean Shaheen, and Chair Davor Balzar—for the lecture and for organizing such an outstanding event.

From AIP Publishing

Promoting *APL Materials* to the MRS Community



At the launch reception for *APL Materials*, Journal Manager Stella Kafka discusses the new journal with potential authors.

AIP Publishing staff attended and exhibited at the MRS Spring Conference in San Francisco. Over 250 attendees signed up to receive e-alerts for our new journal, *APL Materials*, and were entered into a drawing to win an iPad. Editor Judith L. MacManus-Driscoll, along with Associate Editors Brian LeRoy and Chang-Beom Eom, spent time at the AIP Publishing booth talking with prospective authors for the new journal. AIP hosted a very lively *APL Materials* launch party with over 125 people attending at the Thirsty Bear Brewing Company.

Physics Resources Matters

Ivie headlines at women in physics conference



Speakers, panelists, and organizers of the conference, from the left: Rachel Ivie (AIP), Shohini Ghose (Laurier Univ.), Sampa Bhadra (York Univ.), John Berlinsky (Perimeter), Natalia Toro (Perimeter), Melanie Campbell (Univ. of Waterloo), Sarah Croke (Perimeter), Paul Jessop (Laurier Univ.), Carla Fehr (Univ. of Waterloo), Margaret Toyé

Rachel Ivie of the Statistical Research Center (SRC) was one of two plenary speakers at a [conference on women in physics](#) at the Perimeter Institute of Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Canada, on March 8. The event, titled “Women and Physics, Past, Present and Future: A Celebration of International Women’s Day 2013,” brought together US and Canadian scholars in the sciences and humanities who study women in physics. The conference highlighted the current contributions of women to physics, along with research on how women physicists may be better supported in their careers.

Ivie presented the results from the [Global Survey of Physicists](#), which shows that across the world, women physicists have access to fewer work-related resources and opportunities, and that these limitations in turn affect their career progress. The Global Survey of Physicists, which had 15,000 respondents from more than 130 countries, was conducted by the SRC for the Women’s Working Group of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

SPS unveils new public relations video



Filmed at the 2012 Physics Congress, the Society of Physics Students’ (SPS) [new video gives a dynamic view of SPS and its members](#). Viewers gain a good understanding of the diverse opportunities available to them through SPS. In the video, student members expound on the benefits that they derive from their involvement, including Member Society membership, research and travel awards, internships and outreach funding. The video will be used as a recruiting tool for new physics majors and as a means to encourage current members of SPS to become more involved in the society and all it has to offer.

Kudos to Skystorm Productions for their excellent work.

Coming Up

Tuesday, April 23

- ACP Art Reception, *Siting Presence* (College Park)

Thursday, April 25

- Lyne Starling Trimble Science Heritage Public Lecture, 6–8 pm.
Phil Schewe will discuss his new book, *Maverick Genius: The Pioneering Odyssey of Freeman Dyson* (College Park).

April 30–May 2

- STM Spring Conference (Washington, DC)

Wednesday, May 1

- ACP Brown bag lunch talk, 12pm (College Park)

Thursday, May 2

- ACP Blood Drive

Wednesday, May 8

- Staff birthday breakfasts (Melville and College Park)