

Discussion Question Answers The Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Agnes Scott College¹

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
Decatur, Georgia
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
In honor of Agnes Irvine Scott, a Scots-Irish immigrant whose son—George Washington Scott—was the school's primary benefactor. Originally named Decatur Female Seminary.
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1889
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
"To educate women for the betterment of their families and the elevation of their religion"
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
It was founded during the Presbyterian educational movement of the late nineteenth century. This affiliation continues today.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
Agnes Scott started as a religious seminary, but has become a liberal arts college since its origins, offering undergraduate degrees in 34 subjects.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
Agnes Scott offers a Bachelor's of Science degree in Physics.
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Core physics-track courses, as well as advanced physics or astronomy, and a mandatory research or internship section
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It has remained single-sex.

¹ All answers located from Agnes Scott College's sites:

-“History & Traditions,” Agnes Scott College, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.agnesscott.edu/about/history-traditions/index.html>.

-“Department of Physics & Astronomy,” Agnes Scott College, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.agnesscott.edu/physics/majors-minors/physics-major.html>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Barnard College²

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
New York City
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
Frederick A.P. Barnard, 10th President of Columbia University who unsuccessfully lobbied for women's admission to the University.
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1889
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Frederick Barnard's wishes, combined with the efforts of author Annie Nathan Meyer who petitioned Columbia's Trustees successfully for a self-sustaining women's college that would be affiliated with Columbia.
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
No, but it was an affiliate of Columbia University.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
It was founded and remains a liberal arts college that offers education and degrees in a wide range of fields.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
Bachelor's of Science degrees are offered in Astronomy, Physics, and various fields of Applied Physics.
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Several levels of general physics; electricity, magnetism, and optics courses; mechanics; quantum physics, and others are offered
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
Barnard remains single-sex. But, in 1900 it was officially incorporated into Columbia's University system. However, it retains its own board of trustees and faculty, while sharing access to Columbia's facilities and resources.

² All answers located from Barnard College's sites:

-“History,” Barnard College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://barnard.edu/about/womens-college/history>.

-“Physics & Astronomy,” Barnard College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://physics.barnard.edu/department-astronomy-physics>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Mount Holyoke College

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
South Hadley, Massachusetts
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
Unclear, but named by the founder Mary Lyons
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1837, as Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. In 1893 it became Mount Holyoke College.³
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Mary Lyons—a chemist and advocate for women's education—sought to create an elite, affordable source of education for women. She intended the students to be educated, and then go on to educate others as teachers.
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
Mount Holyoke was not directly affiliated with any church or denomination, however “the gospel” was a core tenet of the early curriculum.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
In its early years, the curriculum was broad, including history, physiology, botany, economics, politics and others.⁴ It remains a liberal arts college with a broad curriculum.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
A Bachelor's of Science in Physics is offered
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Courses in general physics, waves, optics, mechanics, and quantum mechanics are offered⁵.
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It has remained single-sex.

³ Answers 1-3 from Mount Holyoke official website. “History,” Mount Holyoke, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/about/history>.

⁴ Answers 4-5 from “Historical Sketch of Mount Holyoke,” document prepared for the Department of the Interior for the National Centennial in 1786 (Springfield, Mass: Clark W. Bryan & Co., 1876), 10-12. Accessed via Galegroup University of Maryland ResearchPort, June 29, 2016. <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/3WVf26>.

⁵ “Courses,” Mount Holyoke Physics, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/physics/courses>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Smith College⁶

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
Northampton, Massachusetts
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
Sophia Smith, a Massachusetts native who decreed in her will that her sizable fortune was to be used to create a women's college in Northampton.
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1871
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Sophia Smith's will stipulated that her fortune be used to create a higher education school for women that was equal to those exclusive to men.
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
While Sophia Smith was deeply religious, Smith College was unaffiliated with any church or religious institution.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
The core academic focus of Smith was humanities, arts and sciences, which continues (albeit expanded) today.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
A Bachelor's of Science in Physics is offered.
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Courses include general physics, electronics, light and relativity, quantum mechanics and others.
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It remains single-sex.

⁶ All answers from Smith College official website:

-“Smith History,” Smith College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.smith.edu/about-smith/smith-history>.

-“Smith History: Sophia Smith,” Smith College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.smith.edu/about-smith/smith-tradition/sophia-smith>.

-“The Major & Minor,” Smith College-Physics, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.smith.edu/physics/major-minor.php>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Spelman College⁷

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
Atlanta, Georgia
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
Laura Spelman Rockefeller: abolitionist, philanthropist, and wife of John D. Rockefeller, who made many donations to Spelman
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1881, as Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary (name changed to Spelman in 1884).
Became Spelman College in 1924.
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Northeastern teachers Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles sought to establish an education institution for freed female slaves in the South.
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
Friendship Baptist Church, in who's basement the school held its earliest classes.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
The early focus was on general education. In 1897 the college "department" opened, and the focus has since remained liberal arts and sciences.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
Spelman offers a Bachelor's of Science degree in Physics.
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
The Physics program offers 5 sub-paths: Advanced Theory/Experiment, Chemical Physics, Pre-Health, Dual-Degree Engineering, and Teaching.
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It remains single-sex.

⁷ All answers from Spelman College official website:

-“History in Brief,” Spelman College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.spelman.edu/about-us/history-in-brief>.

-“About Spelman College,” Spelman College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.spelman.edu/about-us>.

-“Physics Major Requirements,” Spelman College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.spelman.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/physics/major-requirements>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Wellesley College⁸

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
Wellesley, Massachusetts
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
Wellesley was named by its founders, Henry and Pauline Durant, perhaps for the town in which it was located.
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1870
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Henry and Pauline Durant sought to provide more opportunities for women in higher education.
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
Wellesley was unaffiliated at its inception.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
Wellesley was originally a seminary, but in 1890 the curriculum was overhauled to include all the contemporary major sciences. It has remained an eminent liberal arts college since then.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
A Bachelor's of Science in Physics and Astrophysics are offered.
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Courses include mathematics, applications, quantum mechanics and more.
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It remains single-sex.

⁸ All answers from Wellesley official website:

-“College History,” Wellesley College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.wellesley.edu/about/collegehistory>.

-“Majoring in Physics or Astrophysics,” Wellesley College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.wellesley.edu/physics/major>.

Discussion Question Answers Physical Sciences at Women's Colleges

Bryn Mawr College⁹

- 1. Where is your institution located?**
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia
- 2. Who or what was your institution named after?**
The town in which it resides
- 3. When was your institution founded?**
1885
- 4. Why was your institution founded?**
Physician Joseph A. Taylor's will stipulated the establishment of a college "for the advanced education of females."
- 5. Was the institution affiliated with a church at its inception?**
Taylor wished for the institution to reflect the beliefs of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and for the first few years it did. However, by 1893 the Trustees made it non-denominational.
- 6. What was/is the academic focus of the institution?**
From its origin, the College's mission was to offer advanced education alongside research opportunities, which was relatively unique even among male institutions. This mission persists today.
- 7. Does the institution offer a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or PhD program in Physics or a related discipline?**
A.B., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in Physics are offered
- 8. What are the major courses offered in Physical Science curriculums?**
Courses include introductory physics, optics, thermodynamics, calculus, mechanics, and more.
- 9. Has the institution remained single-sex? If not, how and when did this change?**
It remains single-sex for undergraduate study, but graduate programs are co-educational.

⁹ All answers from Bryn Mawr's official website:

- "History," Bryn Mawr College, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.brynmawr.edu/about/history>.

- "Program Requirements and Opportunities," Bryn Mawr-Physics, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.brynmawr.edu/physics/description.html>.

- "Bryn Mawr Physics Courses," Bryn Mawr College, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.brynmawr.edu/physics/courses/>.