



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY

The Need for Science Outreach in the Community

2012 Quadrennial Physics Congress of Sigma Pi Sigma

Orlando, FL November 8 – 10, 2012

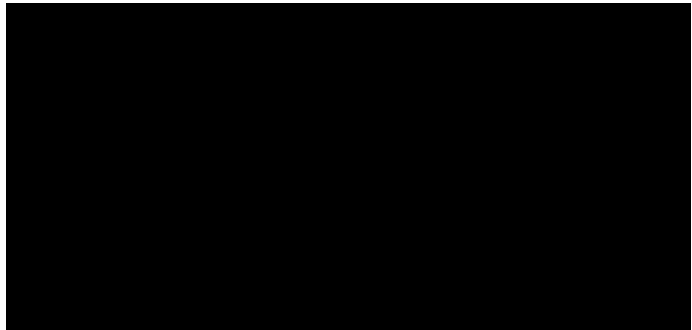
By the Marquette University SPS chapter

Due to the small size of Marquette University's physics department, we are a fairly close group. Sharing a common workspace stimulates cooperation and student involvement. This year, as we were struggling to pull together enough funding to attend the Quadrennial Physics Congress of Sigma Pi Sigma, we entered the *Radiation* magazine crossword drawing. After working together on some of the tougher clues and with a stroke of luck, we won a \$1000 physics crossword challenge offered by Dr. Diane Jacobs, a past president of Sigma Pi Sigma, to support chapter attendance at PhysCon. With her contribution and an SPS Chapter Reporter Award, we were able to pull together the rest of the funding required to send six students to the meeting.

Throughout the Congress, it became increasingly obvious that SPS has an extremely cohesive, encouraging, and helpful group of leaders, members, and volunteers. For example, during a workshop activity we were given a scenario in which each group had to decide how to implement cuts to the federal science budget. Despite the groups being composed of a variety of ages and backgrounds, many of the groups were able to reasonably discuss and come to some kind of an agreement on which cuts would be the most logical. Volunteer "Workshop Wizards" aided the few groups that struggled to come to a conclusion, and in the end believed that given more time the groups would have arrived at a consensus. Looking at society as a whole, and especially considering governmental bodies, this level of collaboration and compromise is atypical, yet throughout the conference this was commonplace. With the positive meshing of the attendees' scientific backgrounds and the cordial attitude of the conference, this made for a pleasant experience.

During the Congress, we appreciated how much effort SPS put into making participation in the Congress both enjoyable and helpful. Each of the scientists that participated was exceptionally

involved and made it a priority to provide the students with useful and relatable information. During "Breakfast with the Scientists," the undergraduate and graduate students ate at tables hosted by professional scientists, which opened us up to many career paths we had not considered. For example, as a result of this breakfast one of our members is now looking



Marquette students with Dr. Jocelyn Bell Burnell after her plenary talk "Reflections on the Predicted End of the World in December 2012." (L-R) Mike Nichols, Abigail Searfoss, Dr. Bell Burnell, Kyle Kimminau, and Justin Provance.



into the possibility of an internship at the Department of



