Greetings from the Undergraduate Women in Physics!

As Undergraduate Women in Physics (UWiP) turns one year old, we say a grateful goodbye to the 2018 Board members as we welcome the new 2019 Board.

One of the hardest things for any new group is conservation of momentum. With the drive and vision of our team of leaders, the participation and excitement of our members, the collaboration and guidance of graduate student groups, and the continued support of the departments, UWiP not only kept up the momentum of our successful first semester but began to accelerate!

The activities that were so well received last spring have continued to grow. We have worked to refine existing programs with an eye for solidifying and improving them. Our hope is to create an infrastructure that will be sustainable long after the founding members graduate.

In addition to hosting lunches and tea-times where students can meet faculty and visiting researchers, we have hosted study breaks to engage with our members. We have also continued to distribute information about events, conferences, internships, inspiring scientists, and career opportunities, as well as advice on navigating the astro/physics major, study and wellbeing resources, profiles on the experiences of Princeton students in physics, and much more.

This semester also brought exciting new collaborations with the Graduate Women in Physics (WiP) group and the Women in Plasma Physics (WiPP) groups. The “What is Grad School?” event hosted by WiP shared valuable insight with undergraduate students. In the same vein, the Plasma Physics Day hosted by WiPP gave undergrads the chance to learn about plasma physics and to connect with the PPPL graduate students.

Even as the graduate students inspire and encourage us undergrads, we seek to spark excitement in younger students through outreach. Our members have acted as role models as we designed and led a Space Travel event for elementary schoolers at the National Chemistry Week in October and a Physics Puzzles session for high schoolers at the Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics in January. Undergraduate, physics graduate, and PPPL graduate students came together to bring the latter event to life. Next up? Volunteering at the PPPL’s Young Women in STEM Conference.

Beyond resources for academic growth, over the last semester, UWiP also has worked on gathering resources and collaborating on policies to nurture the whole student. Members have worked with various administrators to address climate-related concerns in the physics department and have provided resources to faculty to improve the climate in their own classrooms. Groundwork was also laid to create an event for undergraduates to discuss the department climate and build community.
Through the Women in Physics mentorship program we have connected 23 graduate students from PHY, AST, QCB, ELE, and CBE with 45 undergraduates, serving a total of almost 70 women in the physical sciences. We decided to create “families” of women in physics-related fields to create platforms for women to share experiences and advice, foster growth as scientists and students, and construct a more integrated community of powerful women scientists. With the funding from the Women*s Center we were able to host two whole-group events (our launch event and end-of-semester event) aimed at introducing the members of the women in physics community to each other. We also provided each family with gift cards to give them a chance to go out in small groups and get to know each other better.

As we look to the future, we keep our eyes solidly on our core principles: to ensure that all students, regardless of gender identity and/or expression, race, socioeconomic background, and/or sexual orientation feel that they have a place in physics and astrophysics.

With that in mind, we are undertaking several projects to better serve the physics and astro undergraduates. Besides continuing to organize monthly study breaks and other regular enrichment events, we also plan on hosting a panel or workshop on the topic of JPs that will benefit both current juniors and current sophomores, as well as continuing our “What is Grad School?” series. We hope to create new ties to other student organizations on campus by working with them to create events that will benefit a larger audience. We are also increasing our efforts to combat stigma regarding mental health and LGBTQ+ issues in the departments. Finally, we also plan on continuing to improve our mentorship program in the coming semester by implementing a wider variety of events.

Of course, none of this would have been possible were it not for the cooperation and support of the Physics and Astrophysics Departments as well as the Women*s Center. By helping UWIP realize our goals, the departments demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that not only bodes well for the future of the departments, but for the field of physics as a whole.

Thank you for helping us realize an incredible second semester!

With gratitude,
The 2019 UWiP Board

For more information, to get involved, or to receive updates about UWIP activities, contact us via email at uwip@princeton.edu or find us on Facebook at @PrincetonUWIP.