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UWF physics students honored by two national organizations

Pensacola, Fla. – May 24, 2016 – The University of West Florida Department of Physics celebrated two major accomplishments at the end of the 2015-16 academic year. Seven UWF students traveled to present at the American Physical Society’s March Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, and one student came home with an award from the national organization. The department also earned a distinction from the Society of Physics Students.

Josh Dugre, one of the seven UWF physics students to present at the APS meeting in March, received the Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award for his poster documenting research and development of a microscope heater stage.

“It was my goal to use a 3-D printer to create a cost-effective microscope heater stage that could stand on its own against more expensive stages,” said Dugre, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree from UWF this spring. “After a few iterations, I developed a heater stage that is half the cost of a conventional heater stage, and it functions 10 times better in terms of keeping a sample evenly heated.”

UWF was also named a distinguished chapter by the Society of Physics Students national office, a recognition determined by a judges’ panel evaluation of each chapter’s programs and activities from the previous year.

“The Society for Physics Students is a nationally recognized organization, and it provides social opportunities for students to come together and discuss common interests and the news of physics,” said Dr. Aaron Wade, assistant professor of physics. “That social aspect supports the idea of learning communities in which students are better engaged to learn among like-minded individuals.”

Wade, who serves as the SPS chapter’s faculty advisor at UWF, said the chapter has 15 to 20 active members and many more students who participate in SPS in some way. Membership is open to students in any degree program at UWF who have an interest in physics.

“The experience I’ve gained at UWF is priceless, and I know that I’ll be able to succeed in future endeavors thanks to what I’ve learned from the professors as well as other students,” added

Dugre. “The physics department felt more like a family than a collection of professors and students, and the professors always had the time to help me with any school work or projects I was working on for the University.”

To learn more about the UWF Department of Physics, visit uwf.edu/physics.

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See attached photo of UWF students at the American Physical Society’s March Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland



About the [University of West Florida](http://uwf.edu): Founded in 1963, the University of West Florida is a vibrant, distinctive institution of higher learning with undergraduate, graduate and targeted research programs. With multiple locations in Northwest Florida, the University serves a student population of more than 12,000. Dedicated to helping students realize their full potential, UWF favors small class sizes with quality teacher-scholars who deliver personalized, innovative, hands-on learning and leadership opportunities.

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