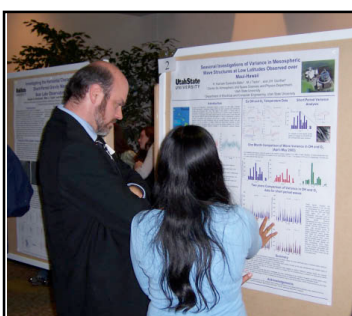


SPS Zone 15 meeting, October 6-7, 2006, at Utah State University, Logan, UT

The SPS Zone 15 meeting at USU on October 6 and 7, 2006, was wildly successful. Held in conjunction with the annual get together of the Four Corners Section of the American Physical Society, six of the Zone's twelve SPS chapters were represented. Because of the inclusive nature of the meeting, there was also SPS participation from Zones 14 (4 chapters), 16 (4 chapters), and 18 (1 chapter). The conference printed program included activity summaries from five Zone 15 chapters.

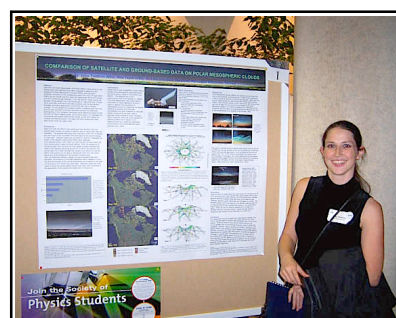


SPS members from four different states meet for the first time



Gary White and award winner Hema Karnam

Students vastly outnumbered others at the meeting (146 to 75). There were 102 student research presentations—67 talks and 35 posters.



USU SPS President Jodie Tvedtnes and her poster on noctilucent clouds

Twelve students—nine from Zone 15—received \$100 apiece in recognition of the high quality of their presentations, thanks to funds made available by the Four Corners Executive Committee.



Some of the award winners.



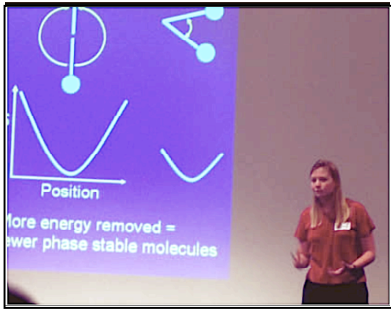
SPS guests in one of the USU nanotechnology labs.

USU's SPS chapter hosted a pizza reception for early arrivers on Thursday night, October 5, and local chapter members acted as guides for those wishing to tour our research laboratories. Though we didn't count the actual number of guests who showed up, we can report that all 25 pizzas disappeared by evening's end.

In addition to oral and poster presentations, students took in popular-level talks by 16 invited speakers—including Gary White, SPS national director. (Thank you, Gary!) Just before Gary's talk on Friday, national SPS and the local USU chapter co-hosted a light lunch for all meeting



Audience partition at Gary's talk.



Invited speaker Heather Lewandowski.

participants. Later, students had the opportunity to speak with faculty representing the physics graduate programs of universities in the intermountain west.

About 100 SPS members attended the banquet Friday night. After the salmon, prime rib, and desserts had been devoured,

Mary Cleave—former astronaut and current Deputy Associate Administrator for Earth Science at NASA—gave an exciting preview of future NASA deep space, planetary exploration, and Earth-observing missions.



Mary Cleave and some future astronauts?

The only slightly disappointing aspect of the whole two days at USU, was that our *own* mission to the local amusement ride development company got rained out.