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UW-River Falls physics students receive national recognition

December 20, 2018 - The University of Wisconsin-River Falls chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) recently received an Outstanding Chapter Award from the SPS national office, marking the 20th time the UW-River Falls chapter has been recognized for its excellence as a top-tier student-led physical sciences organization. This designation is given to fewer than 10 percent of all SPS chapters at colleges and universities in the United States and internationally.

The Society of Physics Students is a professional organization designed for students and membership is open to anyone interested in physics and related fields. SPS operates within the American Institute of Physics (AIP), an umbrella organization for professional physical science societies.

The SPS Chapter at UW-River Falls is advised by Physics Professor Earl Blodgett and is led by student officers. The officers who led the chapter during the time covered by this award (2017-18 academic year) were:

- President Dagan Hathaway, 2018 physics and mathematics graduate
- Vice President Samantha Pedek, 2018 physics graduate
- Treasurer Cavan Maher, physics and mathematics major
- Secretary Lars Poppy, 2018 physics graduate

SPS chapters are evaluated on their level of interaction with the campus community, the professional physics community, the public, and with SPS national programs. The Outstanding Chapter Award recognizes high levels of outreach as well as unique approaches to fulfilling the mission of SPS to “help students transform themselves into contributing members of the professional community.”

The UW-River Falls SPS chapter was recognized for outstanding efforts in outreach to the community, hosting on-campus events such as the Haunted Lab at Halloween, Exploration and Development of Space, 3M Super Science Saturday, Hudson Women in STEM+, and Physics Day with the Minnesota Twins.

UW-River Falls will host the 8th Annual “Border Battle” Science Olympiad Tournament on Jan. 26, 2019, with 62 teams from high schools across Wisconsin and Minnesota (plus two schools from Bismarck, N.D. and one from Lincoln, Neb.) The event is expected to draw close to 1,000 students who will compete in 28 science and technology related events drawn from biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, math and physics.

For more information about the Science Olympiad Tournament or the UWRF Physics Department, email Blodgett at earl.d.blodgett@uwrf.edu.