

Homecoming Brings SPS Program Coordinator Into Sigma Pi Sigma Fold

SIGMA PI SIGMA CHAPTER NEWS

by Kendra Rand, SPS
Program Coordinator



Call me sentimental, but it's always good to go home. I'm lucky enough to have a number of places I can still call home—such as my little apartment here in the Washington, DC, suburbs, my parents' house outside of Chicago, IL, and Carthage.



SPS President Earl Blodgett (right) hands off the charter to Carthage College's Sigma Pi Sigma advisor Jean Quashnock ("Dr. Q").

This was a great honor for me. I arrived early on the day of the induction so that I could visit with my professors and check in on B2 (it still bears the psychedelic paint job courtesy of my classmates). That room is packed with many great memories for me, including chapped hands from spending all day building a model of a telescope in a fish tank, late night chair races down the hall, and an all-night senior thesis work session.

B2 is still the student lounge. In fact, I was able to sit in on an SPS meeting while I was there and hear what the current students are up to. The President of the College even came down during the meeting and congratulated us on the new Sigma Pi Sigma chapter and said lots of presidential things, which is always nice.

Then we headed to a nearby restaurant for the ceremony. Earl Blodgett, SPS President and Professor of Physics at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, performed the ceremony and inducted the Carthage physics faculty, along with me and a few other alumni and current students.

It was fun to sign my name in one of the red books that I always see around the office and to officially get one of the pins that we have boxes of in the storage room. Doug, a co-

(continued on page 12)

I had two homes while I attended Carthage College, a small liberal arts school in Kenosha, WI: Tarble 108 and B2. I lived in Tarble 108 for all four years with Allison, my partner in crime and for Burger King runs. Despite being a small dorm room, it had a great view of Lake Michigan and enough floor space (usually) for me to spread out my books when I was working on one of Dr. Q's take-home physics exams.

B2 was bigger and full of cast-away couches, half-finished telescopes, and a whole lot of miscellaneous parts that someone used to be able to identify. In case you haven't guessed it yet, B2 is the physics student lounge.

Last fall SPS surprised me with a trip back to B2.

I was very involved with the Society of Physics Students (SPS) during my time at Carthage, but we didn't have a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter. The year after I graduated, a group of physics students and faculty attended the 2004 Sigma Pi Sigma Congress in Albuquerque, NM, and were inspired to start a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter at Carthage. With a little prodding from Gary White, my then-new boss, and Director of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma, they decided to install a chapter in November 2007, and to induct me as one of the charter members.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW SIGMA PI SIGMA CHAPTERS!

- ❖ Butler University (Indianapolis, IN)
- ❖ California State University-
San Bernardino
- ❖ Carthage College (Kenosha, WI)
- ❖ Elon University (Graham, NC)
- ❖ Marshall University (Huntington, WV)
- ❖ Washington and Lee University
(Lexington, VA)
- ❖ University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

worker, handed me my welcome packet a few weeks later so Sigma Pi Sigma could save a stamp.

Some people may not understand the significance of being inducted in an honor society at a school they left five years ago, but for me it was a meaningful experience. The induction was an affirmation of my time at Carthage and the work I did there and have done since. It's comforting to know that my professors think I'm a success. The induction also gave me a sense of being connected to the larger physics community—especially all of the “hidden physicists” out there. And finally, it reminded me that even though the current SPS students consider B2 their home, I still belong.

Kendra Rand started as the SPS Program Coordinator in September, 2007. She has a BA in Physics from Carthage College and a MS in Physics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before coming to SPS she worked for the American Physical Society's (APS) outreach department.



The Carthage College charter members.

From left: Dr. Temple Burling, Seth Kuttruff, Dr. Jean Quashnock, Kendra Rand, Dr. Douglas Arion, Jillian Theobald, Brittany Chase, Dr. Brian Schwartz. Not pictured: Dr. Kevin Crosby, Carrie Wright, Daniel Lyons, Lukas Swanson, Casey Burke.

Shannon McKinney was one of nine students and alumni inducted as charter members in the Marshall University Sigma Pi Sigma chapter. In an April 2008 ceremony, SPS staff member Kendra Rand installed Marshall University (the subject of the 2006 motion picture, “We are Marshall”), as the newest chapter of the physics honor society.



Nico Orsini, Physics Department Chair (Left); and Ralph Oberly, SPS Advisor (right); sport their “Einsteins” with new Sigma Pi Sigma member Shannon McKinney.

CHAPTER EVENTS—LOCAL AND ALUMNI VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIGMA PI SIGMA

- ❖ Attend a chapter event.
- ❖ Encourage your local or alumni chapter to apply for a Chapter Project Award (see page 16).
- ❖ Help your chapter plan an event.
- ❖ Offer to speak about your career or other suitable topic at the next chapter event.
- ❖ Invite others that you know who have an interest in physics to chapter events.
- ❖ Provide supplies to your chapter event.
- ❖ Contact your local or alumni chapter.