



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICISTS STUDENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Fall Report 2021

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Goals and Objectives

Over the Fall term, the Student Advisory Council (SAC) has continued to pursue its primary goals, as defined in the SAC's Terms of Reference and SAC strategic plans. These goals can be grouped into the following categories, the first four which are from the Terms of Reference:

1. Advocate on behalf of physics students in Canada to the Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP)
2. Support CAP activities related to students, such as the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference (CUPC) and Canadian Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (CCUWiP)
3. Advise and assist CAP Committees, Divisions, and working groups, including advocacy for student participation
4. Maintain the membership of the SAC and ensure SAC continuity and sustainability
5. Provide networking and involvement opportunities for physics students in Canada
6. Host informative events of interest to physics students
7. Communicate with physics students through our social media and website

The following report details SAC business from September to December, 2021. A follow up report detailing business in the Winter 2022 term, from January to April 2022, will be released in May 2022.

Student Advocacy

The Student Advisory Council continues to advocate for physics students across Canada. In the Summer of 2021, we launched an initiative to interview undergraduate and graduate physics departments in every university in the U15 - the top fifteen research universities (by funding) in Canada. As of December 2021, we have completed twenty eight (28) interviews, with the remaining four (4) to be conducted in the Winter term.

Following the interviews, the SAC will analyze responses in aggregate to reach an understanding of common issues and concerns amongst physics students in Canada. This analysis will be used internally to inform and direct SAC advocacy. All interviews are confidential within the SAC; only common themes will be shared externally.

Finally, the SAC conducted a review of the CAP's student scholarships and identified the need for new CAP scholarships and changes to existing scholarships. The findings of this review were shared with SAC Advisors Francine Ford (CAP Executive Director) and Ben Newling (CAP Director of Student Affairs). In the Winter term, we look forward to continuing these discussions with the CAP.

Supporting CAP Activities and Advising the CAP

The CAP has several divisions for various fields of physics, such as the Division for Theoretical Physics (DTP). To increase student engagement and involvement within the Divisions, the SAC recommended that each Division appoint a student member to their executive team. In December 2021, we drafted a letter with CAP Director of Student Affairs Ben Newling which was sent to all CAP Division Chairs.

The CAM Graduate Conference is an annual meeting of graduate students across North America. In September 2021, the SAC asked the CAP when the next conference would be organized, and this query was forwarded to physics organizations in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba. This inspired an international meeting of these organizations, with an SAC representative in attendance. Key points from the meeting were relayed to the SAC, and member feedback was used to inform the planning of the next CAM conference.

SAC Membership and Continuity

Prior to the Fall term, the SAC had three (3) members, which was too small to effectively represent the physics student community. To address this, the SAC recruited nine (9) new members in early September and two (2) new first year representative members in December 2021. In the Fall term, one (1) member left the SAC. At the end of the Fall term, the SAC had thirteen (13) student members.

As of December 2021, the SAC had no members from Quebec. In the Winter term, we will launch a targeted call for applications in Quebec for at least one (1) new member of the SAC, to conclude by February 2022.

To ensure the continuity and stability of the SAC, internal documentation was written detailing SAC structure, norms, best practices, and leadership structure. The Chair position was split into Undergraduate Chair and Graduate Chair, and new leadership positions Secretary and Task Coordinator were added. Future administrative work includes rewriting the SAC's Terms of Reference, for approval by the CAP Board of Directors.

In October 2021, Anne Xie and Ben Hansson were unanimously elected as Undergraduate Chair and Graduate Chair, respectively.

Student Networking and Involvement

In November 2021, Chairs Anne Xie and Ben Hansson represented the SAC at the Graduate Fair of the 57th Annual Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference. We were also invited to the Graduate Fair of the 2022 Canadian Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics, in January 2022.

There is a need for increased physics student networking opportunities outside of conferences, which have traditionally had financial barriers to participation. To address this, the SAC will create a national physics student network to connect physics students across Canada, hosted on Discord. We plan to launch the first phase of this network by the end of Winter 2022.

SAC Events

In the Fall term, the SAC began planning our first event, a Canadian Science Policy Speakers Panel. This included confirming speakers, choosing an event date, and planning event logistics. Future event ideas include: a science communication panel, career events, and lecture series introducing students to different fields in physics.

Social Media and Website

Website

Over the Fall term, we embarked on a complete overhaul of the SAC website. We added student resources on science policy, science communication, study guides/materials, shared student internships, and advertised physics opportunities and events. We also updated the Chair's message and made profile pages to highlight SAC members.

The SAC has started translation work to create a French version of the website, with plans to launch in the Winter term. We are also collaborating with the CAP to create a student job/internship board.

Social Media

To connect and engage with the physics community, the SAC opened social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Over the Winter term, the SAC plans to launch several social media projects, including: introductory posts highlighting SAC members, interesting facts about physics, and content showcasing the diversity of the Canadian physics community.

Conclusion

Over the Fall term, the SAC has experienced incredible growth and development. We increased our membership from three (3) to thirteen (13) student members, interviewed physics students across Canada, conducted a review of CAP scholarships, and advocated for physics students within the CAP, across Canada, and internationally. Our plans for the Winter term include hosting our first event, launching our Discord student network, and most importantly, continuing to advocate for physics students across Canada.

The SAC greatly appreciates the continued support of CAP Executive Director Francine Ford, and Director of Student Affairs Ben Newling, and we look forward to working with them in the future! We also appreciate the support from the CAP's social media and communications team, who have been a great help with advertising SAC events and projects.

If you have any questions or feedback, please get in touch with us via email at sac@cap.ca.