

We would like to welcome both new and returning students for the new academic year. This is a long newsletter because it contains extra information for new students and seniors.

I. General Information

A. Advising Hours

The Physics department advisors have weekly advising hours, as well as appointments available upon request. You can also ask advising questions via e-mail to advising@phys.ufl.edu. There are now six advisors:

Name	E-mail	Phone	Office
Selman Hershfield	selman@phys.ufl.edu	392-9387	NPB 2138
Gene Dunnam	dunnam@phys.ufl.edu	392-1444	NPB 2364
Darin Acosta	acosta@phys.ufl.edu	846-3144	NPB 2035
Yoonseok Lee	yoonslee@phys.ufl.edu	392-6689	NPB 2233
Amlan Biswas	amlan@phys.ufl.edu	392-8592	NPB 2255
Katia Matcheva	katia@phys.ufl.edu	392-0286	NPB 2073

A list of current advising hours is maintained at:
<http://www.phys.ufl.edu/academics/undergraduate/>

There is also informal advising by Prof. Matcheva for female undergraduate students on Thursdays 11AM-12PM (NPB 2073).

B. E-mail List

If you are a declared Physics major, then you are on the Physics major listserve: PS-MAJORS@lists.ufl.edu. This list is updated nightly to contain a current list of Physics majors. We can also put additional people on the list by request. The list is moderated by Selman Hershfield (selman@phys.ufl.edu) in order to reduce e-mail spam.

C. Society of Physics Students

The Society of Physics Students (SPS) is an organization of undergraduate physics majors. They sponsor many fun events every semester such as movies, field trips, physics demonstrations, and GRE study sessions. If you are interested in joining SPS, you can contact them at sps@phys.ufl.edu. Their president this year is Don Burnette (donb@ufl.edu), and their faculty advisor is Amlan Biswas (amlan@phys.ufl.edu).

D. Computer Accounts

All physics majors may get a computer account in the Physics department. This will give you an e-mail address like yourname@phys.ufl.edu, and you can use the computer lab in room NPB 1212. The lab has UNIX workstations and PC's with access to scientific software and a high speed internet connection. Application forms for computer accounts may be obtained from Chris Scanlon in the Students Services office, NPB 1210.

E. Undergraduate Lounge

Physics majors are also encouraged to visit the undergraduate lounge located on the second floor of the New Physics Building in room 2229 next to the atrium. The lounge is a good place to socialize and to get help on physics courses.

II. Senior Information

A. Applying to Graduate

In order to get a diploma you need to apply to graduate. If you intend to graduate this semester you need to apply to graduate on ISIS by Friday, September 14. You can find links and more information on graduation at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/gradhub.html> . Additional information is located at <http://www.advising.ufl.edu/faq/seniorgradfaq.html> .

After you apply, the Academic Advising Center will then make sure you have satisfied the requirements to graduate. Your transcript will be forwarded to the Physics department to make sure that you have satisfied all the Physics requirements to graduate. At that time I will make any remaining course substitutions, etc. so that the computer recognizes that you have completed all the requirements to graduate. This is, of course, assuming that you have met them.

It is a good idea for all students - not just graduating seniors - to look at the degree requirements for Physics degrees at

http://www.phys.ufl.edu/undergrad_program/reqBS.html

http://www.phys.ufl.edu/undergrad_program/reqBA.html

http://www.phys.ufl.edu/undergrad_program/minor.html

and to look at your on-line audit on ISIS.

B. Recommendation Letters

Whether you are graduating this year or not at some point you will need to ask faculty members for recommendation letters. Here are some guidelines to make the process go smoothly.

1. First, you should choose a faculty member who knows you well and can write a good letter of recommendation. The ideal person would be someone you have done research or independent study with, or a faculty member you got to know well in taking a class.
2. Ask the faculty member well in advance. A month is a good lead time, but even longer will be helpful to both you and the faculty member. Like you, teachers are very busy and the more lead time they have, the better chance they will have the time to produce an excellent recommendation. If you wait too long, the faculty member may not have enough time to write a recommendation and will have to decline to write a recommendation for you.
3. Provide the faculty member with all the relevant information including your UF ID number so they can access your transcript. You may wish to give him or her a paper copy of your transcript, a personal statement, and some examples of your research or other work. The more accessible that information is, the more likely it is to be included in the recommendation, and hence the better the recommendation.
4. Process as much of the recommendation as you can yourself. Many applications have forms. Type in the faculty member's name and address. If the application must be mailed, provide an addressed stamped envelope. It is also an excellent idea to provide a list of where you are applying and the relevant deadlines.

C. Graduate Fellowships

The deadlines for two graduate fellowships are coming up this semester in late October/early November.

- * National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=6201&org=DGE&from=home
- * Hertz Foundation Fellowship Awards
<http://www.hertzfndn.org/dx/Fellowships/>

Good students going to graduate school in any science or engineering discipline should consider applying for these awards. Most graduate students teach during their first year or two of graduate school. Some students end up teaching their entire graduate career. While teaching is excellent experience, obviously one's research and hence graduation will progress faster if one is focusing solely on research. Over the last several years we have consistently had 1 or 2 students receive NSF Graduate Research Fellowships. Although October/November seems like a long way off now, these applications are a substantial amount of work. As part of the application you will actually have to write a 1-2 page research proposal. This takes time, but students who have done it in the past say that it made writing graduate school applications easier.

D. Career Showcase

The Fall Career Showcase takes place Sept. 18 and 19 in the O'Connell Center. The first day is for non-technical internships and jobs, and the second day is for technical positions, which includes students with a science background like Physics. If you are either looking for a job after graduation or an internship/co-op experience, this is the place to start. For those planning to attend the career showcase, we offer the following advice:

1. You will need a resume, which lists your skills and job objectives. The Career Resource Center located on the second floor of the Reitz Union has people on hand to critique and help you with your resume after you have a printed version. Their web site is <http://www.crc.ufl.edu>
2. To do any on-campus interviewing you must register at the Career Resource Center with Gator CareerLink. This is easy to do and allows you to post your resume on-line so that employers can access it. You may register on-line from the CRC home page listed above.
3. Research the companies on the web by first going to the Career Resource Center web site at www.crc.ufl.edu to see who is attending. Companies may not be specifically looking for Physics majors, but they will be looking for your skills.
4. Go to the fair. The typical dress is a conservative suit or dress. If you do not have a suit, wear something nice. You will not have long to talk to individual employers so present yourself well. The top three traits employers say they are looking for are motivation/attitude, communication skills, and ability to work in groups. The recruiter is not going to care how well you can do contour integrals or find leaks in vacuum systems. Make sure to get a business card from the recruiter or a contact person.
5. After the fair, do not wait to be called. Be pro-active and contact the companies you are interested in. Remember you only need one good job offer. It may take several tries before you get it.

E. General Career Advice

The Physics department advisors are also available to discuss different career paths. There are a number of career options available on campus such as the Medical Physics program and the Masters of Science Management, which you may not be aware of. As with everything else, the sooner you start thinking about career paths and planning, the more successful you will be.

Please send comments or additions to Selman Hershfield (selman@phys.ufl.edu).