



All Things Ignatian



Heartland Jesuit Physics Retreat

presented by Michael Cherney for the Creighton Physics Department



Faculty members from the Physics Departments at Creighton, Loyola of Chicago, Rockhurst and Saint Louis U. consider new funding opportunities at the entrance to Horsetheif Cave.

History

In 2003, Dr. Ruth Howes of Marquette University suggested a joint meeting of the Physics Departments from Marquette, Loyola of Chicago and Creighton to discuss teaching issues. Dr. Robert Kennedy, who was then chair of the Creighton Physics Department, suggested that Jesuit Mission be part of the discussion. The first joint meeting of faculty from the three departments took place at a central location for the three institutions, Camp Wyoming, in Wyoming, Iowa. Fr. Larry Gillick served as the facilitator for this meeting. This developed into annual meetings which normally are held in the Dubuque area. Past facilitators include Fr. Gregory Carlson, Fr. Michael Morrison and Br. Guy Consolmagno from the Vatican Observatory.



Fr. Michael Morrison, former Creighton President, facilitates a discussion on the distinguishing characteristics of a science department in an Jesuit university. Patricia Soto from Creighton and Gordon Ramsey from Loyola of Chicago take notes in the background.

Sharing Resources Via The Internet

This year the retreat had its first web participant. From its inception the group has sought to share seminars with remote classrooms at the collaborating institutions. In 2013 the participants committed to submit an application for an external grant to support the development of cross-institutional upper division online courses at the universities involved. This would bring new expertise and specialized courses that offer a distinctive reflective pedagogy in the Ignatian tradition.

Building Bridges Between Jesuit Institutions

Each year the Creighton Physics Department organizes a retreat for roughly 20 faculty members from the Physics Departments at the Jesuit universities in the region. Representatives from Marquette University, St. Louis University, Loyola University of Chicago, Rockhurst University and Creighton University attended in 2013. Faculty from Regis has committed to attend in 2014.



Evaluation of astronomy course content during a Wyoming, IA retreat. Thomas McShane, SJ and Jack Gabel from Creighton are shown with Asim Gangopadhyaya from Loyola, Chris Stockdale from Marquette and Guy Consolmagno, SJ from the Vatican Observatory

Structure

The retreat begins on a Friday evening with most participants having driven to the meeting following their last class. A social hour is typically followed by a brief session. Saturday normally begins with Mass or a prayer service for those wish to attend. The morning meeting tends to have the attributes of a workshop meeting of physics teachers that one might encounter at a national or regional conference. The afternoon session generally focuses on how we can work together to create the best experience for our students.



A small group discussion in Sinsinawa, WI on developing project labs suitable for teams of introductory physics students. Janet Seger and Brad Walters from Creighton share their ideas with Mike Politano and Mellissa Vigil from Marquette and Asim Gangopadhyaya from Loyola of Chicago.

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