



## PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY WEEKLY CALENDAR

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# WEEKLY CALENDAR

## September 24-28, 2012

### DEPARTMENTAL COLLOQUIUM

**"How to double the number of undergraduate physics majors."**

3:30 PM, September 27, 2012  
109 Nicholson Hall

**Sacha Kopp**  
*University of Texas - Austin*

**Host: Dana Browne**

• *Refreshments served at 3:10 PM in 232 (Library) Nicholson Hall* •

Like many colleges and universities around the country, the University of Texas at Austin has a solid physics program that prepares students bound for graduate physics study. For a variety of reasons, the number of students choosing to major in physics had been small, just 200 students in an undergraduate population of about 35,000 (0.6%). When compared to other majors on campus, this population was experiencing negligible growth. Retention from freshman to senior year was at 50%. I will describe a campaign launched in our department aimed at recruiting and retention of majors. This campaign includes actual programmatic changes in the curriculum and instruction of majors. Additionally, it includes a direct marketing campaign that attempted to change student attitudes about physics and its relation to their current major. Finally, it includes a program to reach out to local high schools and engage students in a discussion about their career choices before they apply for college. Ultimately, these components all fit in to a broader category of academic community building, known nationwide to be critical in the strengthening of any STEM major. While the campaign is relatively new, it is possible to share some numerical and attitudinal data that suggests positive changes in the student population.