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Hillsdale College Hosts First Physics Invitational

The conference invites undergraduate students from colleges across the Midwest to present their research, hear from speakers, and network with graduate schools and businesses.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College's Society of Physics Students hosted its first Physics Invitational on Feb. 21. The conference invites undergraduate students from colleges across the Midwest to present their research, hear from speakers, and network with graduate schools and businesses.

"The Hillsdale College Physics Invitational is unique because it is local and focused on undergraduate research," said Michael Tripepi, assistant professor of physics. "It was exciting to see our students take the initiative to bring this opportunity to undergraduates in our area."

Will Clarkson, associate professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, gave the keynote address, discussing his experience in research from his time in undergraduate and graduate school to his current role as a mentor and research advisor. He offered advice to students looking to get more involved in research.

Twelve students also presented research at the conference, including several students in Hillsdale's LAUREATES program.

The LAUREATES program provides funding for students to conduct original summer research projects in the sciences. LAUREATES students undertake high-level research projects under the direction of a faculty mentor. They typically conduct six weeks of full-time research in the early part of the summer, which they integrate into their senior theses the following academic year. Some students also give off-campus presentations at regional or national conferences.

“When we struggled to find a physics conference we could attend, we came up with the idea to host one,” said Paige Lettow ’26, who proposed the idea to the Physics Department. “This was the first science conference hosted at Hillsdale, and we hope to see it grow in future years.”

A networking fair at the conference, coordinated in partnership with the Career Services Office, gave students the opportunity to explore career paths, build connections, and understand post-graduation options. Employers presented internship and full-time roles within their organizations, and graduate programs shared details about their programs including admission, research, funding, and career outcomes.

Physics is offered as both a major and a minor at Hillsdale. Physics students can gain hands-on experience working in Hillsdale’s HALO laser lab, studying radio astronomy using the student-built Low-Frequency All-Sky Monitor, or conducting original research through Hillsdale’s LAUREATES program. All students, regardless of major, can join the Society of Physics Students, and qualifying physics majors can join its honorary branch, Sigma Pi Sigma. The society enables students to share their interest in physics through movies, demonstrations, and field trips. Students also discuss the latest physics news over a weekly lunch table.

For photos from the conference, click [here](#). For photos from science courses at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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