

NSSEC Rice U Status Report – February 2020

Patricia H. Reiff, Rice University

- ***Communication: work on determining next iClip underway***

HMNS is creating a new planetarium show on exoplanets and the possibility for life on other planets. We are working with them to create a clip that would be useful in their show but can stand on its own to distribute free under our iClips project. We have reviewed the first script of the show.

- ***Education: “Astronomy for Teachers” ASTR503 underway***

We now have ten teachers signed up for our ASTR503 class this spring (6 for a grade, 3 for CEU's, and one getting research credit for being a TA). Since we had more interest than we had funding, we came up with additional Rice University funds so that all of the teachers would have a substantial discount on the class tuition. A typical Rice 3-hour class costs over \$6800 in tuition, but with the major cost sharing afforded by this grant, Rice only charges \$1200 per three-hour course. With this grant, we were able to provide tuition scholarships so that the teachers paid even less. (We are sharing the tuition funds so that each student only needs to pay \$100 plus \$150 fees.)

- ***Education: International Astronomy Olympiad***

We are working with our team to plan for the 2020 Olympiad. We have a draft of the quiz to give to prospective students for the 2020 competition. We mentioned the possibility of NSSEC sponsorship to the NSSEC telecon, and are getting partners to help us with the testing and training. The quiz will be taken at the prospective student's school and his teacher will proctor his exam and return it to us for grading.

- ***Education: “Observatory Open House” Feb 1***

Dr. Reiff led the Rice campus observatory open house on January 31. Because Mercury was making a rare appearance, we skipped the lecture and went straight to observing, viewing Mercury, the Moon, Venus, Uranus, the Crab Nebula, the Andromeda Galaxy and the Orion Nebula. Roughly 50 students and public visitors attended.

- ***Communication: AGU SPA telecon Feb 24.***

We participate in the AGU “SPA EPO” Committee, the AGU's first section EPO group. Since the present chair stepped down, Nicholas Gross has agreed to be the temporary chair for the rest of the calendar year. We are working to coordinate outreach events among the AGU, including the new “Education” section that Mark Moldwin heads.

- ***Education: “Solar Week” March 23-27***

Dr. Reiff has agreed to once again participate as a SME in “Solar Week”, March 23-27. (the previous solar week, she was out of town and unable to participate). This will be the 20th anniversary of Solar Week.