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Kim Hill

Illinois Wesleyan University

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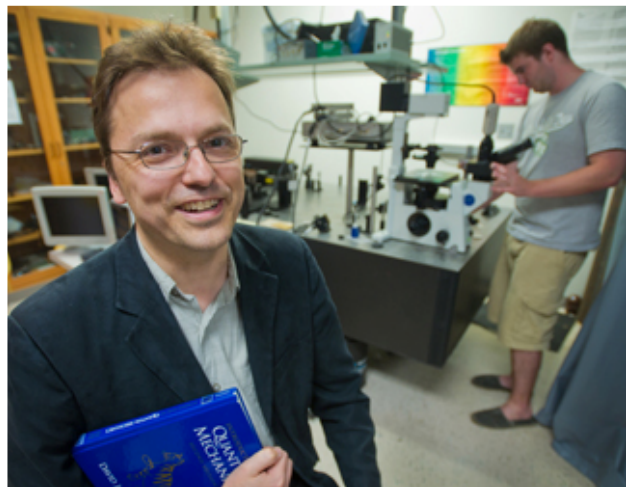
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National Physics Association Honors Spalding

Dec. 3, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of Physics Gabriel C. Spalding will receive the Homer L. Dodge Citation for Distinguished Service to the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) for his “exceptional contributions to the association.”

In a statement, AAPT said Spalding had “spent a laudable amount of time and energy supporting advances in both the depth and breadth of physics education, and lab education in particular.” Spalding will receive the award in January at the AAPT winter meeting.



Gabriel C. Spalding

Spalding is a founder of ALPhA, an association of college and university faculty and staff members dedicated to experimental physics instruction, and served as the association's first president. Spalding said that the need for such an organization became clear after surveying other institutions and discovering many undergraduate programs nationwide offered relatively sparse lab instruction after the first year.

To help his peers gain experience in teaching advanced labs, Spalding chaired or co-led two conferences on lab instruction beyond the first year of college. Each of the conferences included hands-on exposure to contemporary experiments that could be used in undergraduate lab courses.

In 2010, while serving as ALPhA president, he initiated a joint AAPT/ALPhA project to make single-photon detectors available for instructional labs across the nation. So far, he has personally shipped 247 single-photon detectors to 64 institutions.

Spalding has also served AAPT as a member and chair of the Committee on Laboratories, and has been active on the Nominating Committee and numerous others. He has been an organizer or contributor to sessions at nearly every AAPT semi-annual meeting for many years.

“The powerful thing about participating in AAPT is the degree to which all of us, working together, make a difference,” said Spalding.

AAPT is an international organization for physics educators, physicists and industrial scientists. Established in 1953, the Homer L. Dodge Citation was renamed in 2012 in recognition of the AAPT founder.

Spalding earned a doctorate from Harvard University and joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan in 1996. His recent research utilizes holographically textured fields to trap and manipulate matter. For more than 10 years, Spalding has

taken Illinois Wesleyan students to the University of St. Andrews and Dundee in Scotland where they take part in “beam sculpting” research projects, most recently developing non-invasive methods of targeting and destroying tumors. He has also chaired the annual Optical Trapping and Optical Micro-Manipulation Research Conference since 2004.

Earlier this year Spalding was named as the inaugural recipient of the Jonathan Reichert and Barbara Wolff-Reichert Award for Excellence in Advanced Laboratory Instruction. The American Physical Society named Spalding as the recipient in recognition of his achievements in advancing undergraduate lab instruction.

*Contact: **Kim Hill**, (309) 556-3960*