PhysTEC Recognizes Leaders in Physics Teacher Preparation

The Physics Teacher Education Coalition (PhysTEC) recently announced the newest inductees into “The 5+ Club”, a group of institutions that have graduated five or more physics teachers in a given year. Graduating five or more physics teachers a year is a significant achievement, helping to address the severe national shortage of high school physics teachers.

Most colleges and universities graduate fewer than two trained physics teachers a year, and the most common number of graduates is zero. In their 2014 report, the American Association for Employment in Education found that the teacher shortage in physics is number one among 59 education fields.

The institutions recognized for the 2017-18 academic year are:

Brigham Young University (21)
Rutgers The State University of New Jersey (8)
Virginia Tech (8)
University of Kentucky (8)
The College of New Jersey (5)

The United States has a severe, long-term shortage of qualified physics teachers. In fact, in 2013 the National Task Force on Teacher Education in Physics reported, “the need for qualified teachers is greater now than at any previous time in history.” Of the approximately 1,400 new teachers who are hired to teach physics each year, only 35% have a degree in physics or physics education.

PhysTEC, a flagship education program of the American Physical Society (APS), aims to improve the education of future physics teachers by transforming physics departments, creating successful models for physics teacher education programs, and disseminating best practices. The project has funded more than 40 sites to build physics teacher education programs (see www.phystec.org for more details).

The PhysTEC program is led by APS in partnership with the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), with support from the National Science Foundation.

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About APS

The American Physical Society (www.aps.org) is a non-profit membership organization working to advance and diffuse the knowledge of physics through its outstanding research journals,
scientific meetings, and education, outreach, advocacy, and international activities. APS represents over 50,000 members, including physicists in academia, national laboratories, and industry in the United States and throughout the world. Society offices are located in College Park, MD (Headquarters), Ridge, NY, and Washington, DC.