

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS**

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## **Summer Physics Camp at U. T. Dallas Aims to Boost Girls' Interest in Science**

### ***Sixteen Middle-Schoolers to Attend Intensive Five-Day Program***

RICHARDSON, Texas (May 31, 2005) – A group of local middle school girls will spend a week at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) this summer, delving into the arcane world of physics – and perhaps igniting a lasting passion for the sciences.

The students, all of whom will be entering the seventh or eighth grade in the fall, will attend the second annual UTD Summer Physics Camp, to be held June 6 – 10 on the university's campus in Richardson.

Sixteen students were selected from dozens of applicants for the intensive, five-day camp, at which participants, under the tutelage of UTD faculty and students, will engage in various hands-on experiments to learn more about fields like mechanics, electromagnetism, optics and nanotechnology. Six girls who attended last year's camp will take part in a one-day session featuring advanced activities on June 11.

"Girls in the seventh and eighth grade are at an age where many of them seem to tune out science and math," said Kelly Ann Drake, president of Women in Physics at UTD, the sponsor of the camp, and a Ph.D. candidate and research assistant in Space Sciences. "The physics camp offers a setting where women can mentor girls in science, hopefully passing along some of our knowledge of and enthusiasm for our chosen fields of study and work."

With one exception, all of the faculty and staff at the camp will be female, Drake said.

The camp's daily sessions, which run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., are packed with myriad activities, ranging from a "bungee egg drop contest" to making electromagnets, simple motors and flashlights to measuring the speed of light and working with lasers. The advanced campers will build a more elaborate motor, measure the temperature of different colors of light and construct rockets, among other activities.

The girls will be divided into four teams of four girls each. The teams will compete with each other to demonstrate how well campers have learned to work together to collect and analyze data, Drake said.

Drake termed last year's inaugural physics camp "a great success" and said she looks forward to this year's program with a great deal of enthusiasm. Judging by the essays each of the applicants were required to submit, which outlined reasons for wanting to attend the camp, the girls are excited as well. Following are excerpts, provided by Drake, from some of the essays:

- "My interest in science began when I was about five with my at-home experiments."
- "Ever since I can remember I've wanted to be a scientist."
- "I would like to be a paleontologist or a NASA scientist."
- "Science is a magic that uncovers the mysteries of life."
- "Being part of the camp would really quench some of my thirst for scientific knowledge."
- "I love to take things apart and figure out how they work and how to put them back together. I've gotten into trouble a few times when I couldn't figure out how to put the things back together again."
- "I have concluded that learning physics most definitely outshines being a couch potato all summer."

Those chosen to attend the camp come from schools located in Dallas, Richardson and Plano.

### **About UTD**

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor®, enrolls more than 14,000 students. The school's freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor's,

master's and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu).

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