

APR10-2009-000089

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR10 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

SPIN-UP Ten Years Later: What's Still Solid and What's New

RUTH HOWES, Ball State University

Seven years ago, the SPIN-UP Report produced by the National Task Force on Undergraduate Physics identified several key characteristics of undergraduate physics programs that were thriving amid a general decline in the numbers of physics majors. Since that time, the number of physics majors graduating has increased each year. Nevertheless, the rate of growth has slowed in the last several years, and many departments are threatened in the current financial crisis because of low undergraduate enrollments. All undergraduate programs face challenges of the growing use of computation in physics, the pressure from administrators and funding agencies to participate in interdisciplinary work, the lack of gender and ethnic diversity in physics, and changes in students' math preparation as well as the standard issues of large service enrollments and scarcity of resources. Therefore, this is an appropriate time to revisit the conclusions of the SPIN-UP report and consider its recommendations and new ideas to continue the growth of robust undergraduate physics programs.