Longitudinal Study of the Impact of attending the PPPL NUF/SULI Program on Undergraduates’ Careers

STEPHANIE WISSEL, JAMES MORGAN, JACQUELINE FIERROZ, JERRY ROSS, ANDREW ZWICKER — The Science Education Program at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory encourages autonomy and engagement in undergraduate research. Small-scale experiments permit students to take control of a project as well as participate in all aspects of the scientific process. Student involvement in larger-scale projects like NSTX and D3D introduce students to the laboratory-wide, collaborative nature of fusion research. Students involved in the national NUF/SULI programs organized by the SEP are more likely to become plasma scientists than the average physics student. Preliminary data also suggests that students return to the SEP on a multi-year basis and that they are likely to pursue a career in plasma physics. Using survey methods, we studied what draws those students to plasma physics and whether practices used at the PPPL can be generalized to other research programs.

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