

Abstract Submitted
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In Franklin's Path: Establishing Physics at the University of Pennsylvania PAUL HALPERN, University of the Sciences in Philadelphia — In 1751 Benjamin Franklin established the Academy of Philadelphia, the precursor of the University of Pennsylvania. Among its curricular mandates he envisioned included “Natural and Mechanic History,” using a popular text he suggested by Noël Antoine Pluche that encompassed optics and celestial dynamics among its subjects. This talk will trace the history of physics research and education at Penn from its establishment, to the appointment of the first designated physics professor, George Frederic Barker, in 1873, to the opening of the Randall Morgan Laboratory in 1901 under the directorship of Arthur Goodspeed, and finally to the inauguration of the David Rittenhouse Laboratory in 1954 under the university leadership of Gaylord Harnwell.

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