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APS Guide to Effective Practices in Undergraduate Physics Programs: What it is and why you should care¹
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Physics departments and programs in the United States face numerous challenges. While there is an upward trend in the number of students graduating in physics nationwide, many individual programs struggle to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of students to keep their programs healthy. Although verifiable assessment of student learning continues to grow in importance in the higher education landscape, particularly to regional institutional accreditation bodies, there are few resources to assist departments in developing effective assessment programs. Additionally, research-based pedagogical methods that have demonstrated clear improvement in both learning gains and student retention, especially of underrepresented groups, have not been as widely adopted as they could be. And finally physics remains among the least diverse of all STEM disciplines, in spite of continuing efforts. In light of these challenges, the Council of the American Physical Society voted in 2015 to form a national blue-ribbon task force charged with creating a living guide to effective evidence-based practices for undergraduate physics programs. Working in partnership with AAPT, the guide will assist departments nationwide in all of these areas, and more. In this talk we review the vision of the task force for the guide and progress in its development so far.

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