

University of Central Florida Chapter Provides Venues to Discuss Materials Research

"A collection of motivated students dedicated to the fellowship and promotion of the individual and attaining higher standards of academic excellence through collaboration."

—Mission statement of the Materials Research Society University Chapter at the University of Central Florida (<http://mmae.ucf.edu/mrs>)

The Materials Research Society University Chapter at the University of Central Florida (UCF) is one of the most active and growing clubs within the campus. Since its establishment in 1997, the chapter's membership has grown to more than 50 graduate and undergraduate active student members. The chapter is devoted to the advancement of materials science by hosting events, conferences, industrial connections, outreach programs, and other social activities.

One of our major events is "Materials Day," the chapter's yearly fellowship and mingling extravaganza where students from various fields come together to learn about the new and upcoming technologies that will affect our everyday lives. This event offers students an opportunity to present their work and interact with faculty and company personnel. This year, the event included a symposium where top students and K-12 school teachers presented their findings from their summer-long nanotechnology research. They conducted their research as part of the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) program, which has a site at UCF. According to Sudipta Seal, the chapter's faculty advisor, "Materials Day is a great event to get to know more about materials science and engineering research at the campus." Students, faculty, news reporters, and university administrators, including the vice provost, president, dean, and department chairs, attend this event.

The University Chapter also joins hands with other materials societies on campus. The MRS Chapter and the Florida Chapter of the American Vacuum Society co-organized a spring conference this year. The MRS Chapter also supported the university's orientation for first-year students and an engineering open house.

The MRS University Chapter encourages off-campus events as well. It helps students attend or participate in interna-



◀ MRS University Chapter participants in front of their display for the engineering open house for new students.

The National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) final symposium.



Faculty members and university administrators congratulate students during an awards ceremony for all of their hard work and effort after a long research program at the "Materials Day" event. (From left to right) S. Seal (chapter advisor), T. Hickey (UCF provost), M.J. Soileau (UCF vice president of research), and V. Desai (director of the Advanced Materials Processing Analysis Center—AMPAC).

tional conferences and visit other academic and industrial sites around the world. Some of the undergraduate student members presented their research at the 2003 MRS Fall Meeting in Boston. Fundraising for these events is a challenge, but the chapter has received funds from the university's student government association as well as MRS.

These off-campus events offer chapter members one way of getting acquainted with current research trends in universities, industry, and the national laboratories. Another way is through the chapter's series of guest lectures. L. Hench (National Academy of Engineering), V. Kapoor

(former president of the University of Toledo), P. Holloway (Florida Distinguished Professor), and N. Gitis (CETR Inc.) have been among the renowned speakers in this series.

To help students who are seeking employment, the chapter works hand-in-hand with UCF's career resource center. The chapter's Web site hosts an on-line listing of job opportunities, and the chapter is developing relations with UCF's alumni in order to "open the door" for internships and co-op positions. Tours are arranged to companies such as Lucent Technologies, Siemens Inc., Lockheed Martin, and Mitsubishi Power Systems Inc. so that chapter members can experience the corporate environment while establishing contacts for future internship and employment possibilities.

The MRS University Chapter at UCF is devoted to upholding its mission and establishing its identity as a dynamic student club.

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