Growing the Professional Science Master’s in Physics

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The Professional Science Master’s (PSM), a Sloan Foundation-sponsored initiative, has been in existence for approximately 10 years, and now is present on more than 60 university campuses nationwide. The PSM in Physics has been one that has particularly thrived, with various specializations such as medical physics, nanoscale physics, and physics for entrepreneurship. The PSM meets an important societal need and serves bright students who are interested in applying their scientific knowledge in industry, either on the technology or business side. It also helps to strengthen physics departments and provides many benefits that can in turn advance PhD programs. There is now a wealth of resources that can assist physics departments in establishing or nurturing PSMs. The Council of Graduate Schools has been very instrumental in leading this charge, and in 2007, with support from the Sloan Foundation, the National Professional Science Master’s Association was established with the mission of supporting PSMs and connecting program directors to industry partners.