

The Docent Program

The LIGO Docent Program, in partnership with the Southern University at Baton Rouge, has continued to serve SUBR and other students who have a strong interest in STEM, education, and service to the community. There have been 138 docents trained since the program began in 2007. Since the beginning of the program in, we have surveyed and interviewed the docents on a regular basis, observed docent training, and observed docents in action on the exhibit floor.

Key Accomplishments of the Docent Program:

- LIGO SEC is recruiting docents who have a strong interest in STEM, education and service
- Docents highly value all of the activities we asked about
- ~50% say their docent experience has influenced their college, job, or career decisions
- LIGO SEC offers a unique experience in the docent program
- LIGO SEC impacts docents' interactions at work and in the community
- Docents have significant memories of their LIGO SEC experience

LIGO SEC offers a **unique experience** for Docents (N=29, 2017):

| Answer Options | Not at all | A little | Some | A lot | A great deal |
|---|------------|----------|------|-------|--------------|
| The LIGO Docent Program provided me with experience I could not have gained anywhere else. | 0 | 7 | 18 | 11 | 64 |
| The LIGO Docent Program provided me with knowledge and skills I could not have gained anywhere else. | 0 | 7 | 18 | 18 | 57 |

LIGO SEC Docent Program **influences Docents' engagement and work in the community:**

The program has allowed me to confidently and effectively communicate scientific concepts in a way for a non-scientific person can understand. It has helped in boosting my confidence and self-esteem when presenting in front of individuals. I am able to use snacks in the classroom to help relay scientific concepts to my students. Participating in the program also helped me to be able to successfully organize a Family STEM at my current school.

My experience as a docent has changed the way I interact with my community. LIGO has given me more growth and confidence within myself to be able to speak in front of a big crowd and convey my message to them without any hesitation. LIGO] made me more interested in volunteering and giving back to the community because the children need it.

LIGO has taught me the importance of reaching out to our youth, which are the foundation to the future of this country. Having them Educate in a STEM background will grant them many educational and career options.

Docents' experiences at LIGO SEC influence their decisions about college, jobs and careers:

| Answer Options | Not at all | A little | Some | A lot | A great deal |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| College decisions | 7% | 17% | 21% | 28% | 28% |
| Job decisions | 0% | 24% | 17% | 38% | 21% |
| Career decisions | 0% | 14% | 24% | 38% | 24% |

LIGO Docent program helps to prepare Docents for future careers in STEM:

| Answer Options | Not at all | A little | Some | A lot | A great deal |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| The LIGO Docent Program helped me know better what to expect if I go into a math, engineering, medical or technical field. | 0% | 11% | 21% | 29% | 39% |
| The LIGO Docent Program provided role models and/or mentors to me. | 0% | 7% | 18% | 39% | 36% |
| The LIGO Docent Program taught me about how to effectively communicate about STEM concepts and skills. | 0% | 4% | 7% | 32% | 57% |
| The LIGO Docent Program gave me personal contacts and information that have been useful to me. | 4% | 18% | 21% | 21% | 36% |