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O19 - Preparing Future Science Communicators: An Experiential Astronomy Learning Internship Program at DOST-PAGASA

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In the Philippines, the growing interest in astronomy and the continued development of the astronomy community provide a dynamic context for astronomy education and science communication initiatives. One such educational opportunity is the internship program implemented by the Space Science and Astronomy Section of DOST-PAGASA, which provides students from diverse educational backgrounds with experiential learning in astronomy education and science communication. The program welcomes participants, including senior high school students, undergraduate astronomy majors, and students from non-astronomy disciplines. Through authentic learning activities, the internship enables interns to integrate astronomy knowledge with science communication practices.

A central component of the internship is the development of a planetarium lecture, which interns subsequently present to a supervisor or, when opportunities are available, to visiting audiences. For internships lasting three weeks or longer, participants also prepare an astronomical diary that translates monthly astronomical information into an accessible format, providing additional practice in communicating astronomy concepts to the public.

This presentation describes the structure, implementation, and educational rationale of the internship program as a model for experiential learning in informal astronomy education. It highlights how the program engages participants across different educational levels and disciplines through structured activities that integrate astronomy knowledge, planetarium presentation skills, and science communication. By sharing this internship framework, the presentation offers a practical example of how experiential learning can support the development of future science communicators in informal astronomy education.

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