

Gunion Fest Welcome

Winston Ko

Good Morning. Welcome to UC Davis. I am Winston Ko. I have retired. The current Interim Dean is Alex Navrotsky. Let me first read a congratulatory note on her behalf:

“Today we celebrate Jack Gunion's distinguished career of 39 years at UC Davis, especially as a tireless and successful “Higgs hunter’s guide”. Professor Gunion, I apologize for not being able to congratulate you in person. Best wishes for the further journey ahead!”

Just a trivia piece: Jack, Dean Navrotsky and I myself were all born in a four-month period of 1943. I am the oldest and Jack the youngest. This Gunion Fest is to celebrate Jack’s 70th!

In the early 1970’s, we are a small department with fewer than 20 faculty members, but we started to have a quite active High Energy experiential physics group in the forefront of Inclusive Reactions and the physics at the new Fermilab. Because of the proximity to LBL, we survived without any High Energy theorist.

In 1975, we recruited Jack as our first High Energy theorist. He came as an Assistant Professor, giving up an Associate Professor position at Univ Pittsburgh. This risk-taking shows how savvy he is with our academic personnel process. I came and flew through the ranks and was promoted to full professor in four years.

We certainly benefitted from the presence of Jack and his phenomenology emphasis. Dick Lander likes to say that theorists are our high priests guiding our way. Being a Higgs hunters guide Jack certainly fit the bill as a high priest.

Jack contributed greatly to the development of our department. Our High Energy theory group has five faculty members, and some of the excellent people spent their early career on the UC Davis faculty, such as Bob Cahn and James Wells, both are here today and Tao Han who cannot come because of P5.

Jack played key roles in our major expansion initiative. Eighteen years ago we started the inflation of our astrophysics faculty from one to 10 today. The Dean's external advisory committee chaired by Michael Turner identified the niche of Cosmology with bridge to High Energy Physics and Jack is on the committee as the anchor on the other side.

Twelve years ago, when I was still the Physics Chair, I developed HEFTI with Jack. Not only we recruited three exceptional HE theoretical faculty, it hosted Jack's innovation and now famous Rapid Response Workshop with dialog between theorists and experimentalists. HEFTI also hosts public talks on High Energy Frontiers, very popular in the Davis Community and among students.

This Gunionfest is under the auspicious of HEFTI. I'll stop here now and LET THE GUNION FEST BEGIN!