



## Caribbean Science Foundation

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### Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering (SPISE)

Program Dates: July 15 – Aug 13, 2017

REQUEST FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION – Current Science and Math Teachers

Letter of Recommendation deadline: **March 31, 2017**

#### Program Description

SPISE is an intensive residential 4-week summer program in science and engineering, offered by the Caribbean Science Foundation for promising Caribbean high school students 16 and 17 years of age, and directed by Professor Cardinal Warde and Dr. Dinah Sah. The goal is to help address the low numbers of Caribbean students pursuing advanced degrees in science and engineering. This program is one of the Caribbean Science Foundation's initiatives with the long-term goal of helping to diversify the economies of the Region by stimulating more technology-based entrepreneurship within the Region. SPISE is hosted on the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies, Barbados, and is a clone of the well-known MITES program at MIT for which Professor Warde also serves as the Faculty Director.

SPISE students are totally immersed (24/7) in university-level calculus, physics, biochemistry, entrepreneurship, Mandarin, Caribbean Unity studies, and hands-on projects in robotics, electronics and computer programming. The SPISE environment discourages rote learning and teaches students how to focus on understanding and applying the fundamentals so as to achieve mastery of the material. The objective is to help the student build self confidence in solving complex problems that they may never have encountered before.

The value of teamwork (learned in the hands-on projects) is yet another essential skill that is emphasized, along with proactive time-management skills. Instructors in the SPISE include university professors from the Caribbean and the Diaspora (including MIT), and senior management professionals from leading biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies in the Diaspora. The program culminates with student project competitions in which each team first gives an oral presentation of their hands-on project before demonstrating the workings of their project. These final competitions are open to the public.

The website of the Caribbean Science Foundation is <http://caribbeanscience.org> and more information about SPISE can be found at <http://caribbeanscience.org/projects/spise.php>.

#### Content Guidelines for Letter of Recommendation

Your letter of recommendation is a critical component of your student's application. Please provide us with a thoughtful evaluation of your student's preparedness for the SPISE as follows:

1. Clearly state your name, title and the course taught, as well as how long you have known the student.
2. Comment on the student's performance relative to others in your class(es). State the student's ranking in your science or math class (and total number of students in the class). Also comment on the student's performance relative to all other students you have taught over the years at this level.
3. Address inconsistencies, if any, between performance and course grades or test scores.
4. Summarize the concepts that the student will have learned in your subject area by the time the SPISE starts, and specifically comment on the student's proficiency with these concepts.
5. Comment on areas where the student needs to improve.
6. Give us your assessment of the motivation/passion of the student for science and technology. Comment on the student's aptitude for learning new material, going beyond the material taught, participation in class, attention to deadlines (including for homework assignments), and general timeliness.
7. Comment on other attributes of the student - leadership qualities/potential, communication abilities, working with/helping other students, honesty/integrity etc.

8. SPISE is a very demanding environment with high pace and pressure over 4 weeks. Most of the student's classmates will be among the top STEM students from their country. Students in SPISE must necessarily be emotionally strong and stable. Comment on how you anticipate the student would be able to cope with the pace, stress and pressure of the SPISE environment, particularly while living away from his/her parents/family, perhaps for the first time.
9. Provide your view of the student's potential for success at the university level, and in his/her chosen career.

**Submission Guidelines for Letter of Recommendation**

Your letter should be written on school stationery, signed, dated, converted to a PDF file and submitted by e-mail as an attachment to [csfhdq@gmail.com](mailto:csfhdq@gmail.com) with the subject line "SPISE 2017-LastNameOfStudent-Science or Math Teacher Rec.-YourLastName". Your letter of recommendation should arrive at the CSF by **March 31, 2017**.

Should you have any questions about SPISE or the letter submission, please contact the CSF office:

**Email:** [csfhdq@gmail.com](mailto:csfhdq@gmail.com)

**Telephone:** 1-246-417-7493.

**The CSF thanks you for your time and effort!**