



Elizabeth Simmons  
Director of The Lyman Briggs School of Science  
and Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy - Michigan State University  
[5th Annual Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award \(2005\)](#)

Dr. Elizabeth H. Simmons is Director of the Lyman Briggs School of Science and a Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at MSU. Lyman Briggs is an innovative residential undergraduate community that focuses on the study of science and its societal context.

Completing her undergraduate work at Harvard University in 1985, Simmons earned her M.Phil. in physics at Cambridge University as a Churchill Scholar. She returned to Harvard for her doctoral degree and postdoctoral fellowship then spent a decade as a professor at Boston University before joining MSU's faculty in 2003. She is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and member of the Aspen Center for Physics.

Simmons is a particle theorist, whose research focuses on the origins of the masses of the elementary subatomic particles, particularly that of the top quark. She enjoys teaching physics courses at all levels, from introductory courses for freshmen to graduate courses. Part of her mission as an educator is to encourage more students (especially from groups now under-represented in physics) to consider studies and careers in the physical sciences.

Together with her husband, MSU physics professor R. Sekhar Chivukula, and their two sons, Ari and Anand, Simmons spends her free time biking, hiking, gardening, cooking, and reading.

In making her nomination, MSU president Dr. Lou Anna K. Simon said: *"Elizabeth Simmons is a strong advocate for the advancement of women scholars in mathematics and science...she is only the second woman to hold the position of director of the Lyman Briggs School and has shown exceptional leadership in its current expansion projects.*

*In addition, her vigorous research program is funded by the National Science Foundation and she is recognized as a world-renowned leader in the field of particle theory. In 2004 she was elected Corporate Secretary of the Aspen Center for Physics. (Important to this award) she has founded a Pathways Program to introduce hundreds of high school girls to the sciences each year, and a Focal Week on Women in Physics for women in her profession.*

*Dr. Simmons is approachable, reasonable and has a reputation for fairness and equity. She is an outstanding example... for the advancement of women in higher education."*

Dr. Martha Tack, the Michigan Network State Coordinator adds: Elizabeth Simmons is a remarkable scientist, academician and mentor. Internationally renowned, she has played a highly visible national leadership role in the particle theory community and was elected Corporate Secretary of the Aspen Center for Physics in 2004. We applaud Dr. Simmons' considerable academic achievements in disciplines in which women have proven they can excel. Most importantly, we applaud her commitment to the encouragement of young women to enter the sciences and the 'fun fact' that her campus office is noted for its "Board of Directors" bulletin board which features postings of news on exciting research as well as pointed articles deflating the notion that girls are not good in math!"