

PHYSICS



You don't have to be an honors student to major in physics. Actually, you just have to be interested in learning about the physical world and how it works. That's what motivated Philip Meyer. He came to the College for the sciences and ended up in a unique program underwritten by NASA.

Meet Philip. Ambitious. Curious. And like any college student, keen to map out his future. He knew the College would be a good fit for him because of its strong reputation in the sciences. But he wasn't convinced that physics was the right major until after he had taken the intro courses for almost every other major in the sciences.

Because of this department's emphasis on research, Philip found himself working with a professor investigating doped carbon nanotubes. "Initially, I was involved in the data analysis. I actually spent six weeks doing independent research on this topic at another university. Mostly, I was learning about the equipment involved and learning how to interact in a larger lab. It gave me a feeling for what graduate school might be like. I owe that opportunity to my physics professor. He secured the role for me as well as the funds to make it possible."

Among the most engaging experiences that Philip had in this major was a course entitled

NASA Mission Design. "We followed the same process that scientists go through when they propose missions to NASA. To do that, we partnered with students at the University of Alabama Huntsville and a university in Paris. Together, we proposed two missions. What's cool is that our work was actually guided by the scientists and engineers at NASA. We not only got to travel to Paris, but we presented our mission proposals to NASA's review board."

Philip sees that course as the department offering its students real-world experience. "I'd never had a class like that. Not only was our grade riding on the quality of our proposals, but also the impression we made on people in this field. If you succeed, there are definitely opportunities. NASA's professionals encouraged us to share our ideas with others, sending one of the previous year's winners to an international conference. So, yes, it's an academic exercise, but if you come up with good ideas and creative solutions, well, you never know where that can lead."

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

We offer both a B.S. and a B.A. in physics. Our programs are taught by a dedicated faculty whose expertise ranges from nanoscience to condensed matter physics to atmospheric microphysics. We train students to examine physical phenomena and to search for understanding about how the physical universe works. In the process, students are prepared for careers in physics or related fields such as engineering, biophysics, medicine, geophysics, meteorology and business.

Facts

Many of our majors go on to attend premier universities; recent graduates are pursuing Ph.D.s and other advanced degrees in physics, math, astrophysics, biomedical science and nuclear engineering among others.

Our professors garner significant support for their research, which expands opportunities for students.

Opportunities

We also offer concentrations and minors or in energy production, biomedical physics, computational neuroscience and meteorology.

Significant, hands-on research opportunities are available in applied physics, astrophysics, atmospheric physics, biophysics and computational physics.

The department puts on colloquia once a week featuring talks by prominent scholars.

The Society of Physics Students offers mutual support and social interaction for students.