

ASTROPHYSICS



There's only one place in South Carolina where you can get an undergraduate degree in astrophysics. That's right, the College of Charleston. And the combination of dedicated faculty, engaging research and empowering experiences is hard to resist. Just ask Thea Kozakis.

When Thea went looking for universities that could fulfill her interest in astrophysics, she was quickly drawn to the College. One trip to campus, she says, was enough to cement her decision. Since then, she's had that choice confirmed dozens of times.

"I really like that the professors in this department are excited about their subjects. My introductory physics professor was always animated and offered lots of demos. I remember when we were studying electricity and magnetism he once cooked hotdogs by running electricity through them to teach us about current. To me, it was super exciting. And then, we got to eat the hotdogs."

Though she enjoys math and physics, Thea says that astrophysics has been her chief interest since high school. "In particular, I really like the study of extra-solar planets. These are planets that revolve around other suns. The idea that there may be other life out there in the universe really fascinates me. And I think

it's really cool that sometimes we're able to find other planets going around other suns. Fortunately, the physics department faculty has someone who specializes in this area. He was actually on the team that discovered the coolest (temperature wise) extra solar planet."

Thea was hired as a summer research assistant by that same professor, and planned to continue her research as an independent study. "A lot of astrophysics and physics students do research here. It's pretty common and it's really good experience. Actually, all of the students are highly encouraged to do research with their professors. I really like that about this department."

What will Thea do with a degree in astrophysics? "I'm not entirely sure what I'll do. I hope to get additional research experience here and then attend a graduate program. After that, I hope I can do research full time. But even if I end up in some other area of astrophysics, I know I'll be well prepared to succeed."

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

The Department of Physics and Astronomy offers both a B.S. in astrophysics and a B.A. in astronomy. Our dynamic faculty members possess expertise in a wide array of areas from stellar structure to black hole accretion to gamma ray bursts. Every year, our professors garner an impressive amount of financial support for their research. The grants they secure present numerous opportunities for students because of the pronounced emphasis we place on undergraduate research. In fact, all astrophysics majors are required to complete at least one capstone research project.

Facts

Eight professors in the department actively conduct research in astrophysics.

The department participates in a shared network of telescopes situated around the globe.

Most of our graduates attend graduate school, the rest obtain ready employment.

Opportunities

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

Faculty and students meet for pizza, refreshments and lively discussion every other Friday.

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