

# UM Department of Physics and Astronomy

## NOVEMBER 1, 2024

### DEPARTMENT NEWS

#### STUDENT NEWS

##### Quinn Campagna and Nauman Ibrahim: Prospectus defenses

Nauman and Quinn successfully defended PhD prospectuses on October 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> respectively. Congratulations to both on passing this milestone on the path to the PhD.

##### Undergraduate Students at SESAPS

BASS (Basic Acoustics Summer School) students, Michael Basha and Alex Mobley, who worked with Drs. Labuda and Mobley during the summer, presented their research at the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Section of the American Physical Society (SESAPS) conference which was held from October 24 - 26 at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. Several undergraduate physics majors also attended the conference.

##### Graduate Students in 3MT Round 1

Madusanka Abeykoon, Subhayu Bagchi, Aniket Khairnar, Guoqin Liu, Josh Moore, Purnima Narayan and Sina Rostami participated in the first round of the 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) competition on Wednesday October 30<sup>th</sup>. Best of luck to all on advancing to the final round on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### ALUMNI NEWS

Dr. Meghna Bhattacharya returned to the department to give a talk in the department colloquium series on October 22. During the visit she also met with the Women in Physics group. She is now a postdoctoral researcher in the Scientific Computing Division at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.

Dr. Robert Lirette also returned to give a talk in the NCPA colloquium series on November 1 (today). He is now a National Research Council postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.



Photo: Dr. Anuradha Gupta at Science Café (courtesy Purnima Narayan)

#### General Department News

- One of Dr. Jake Bennett's articles is highlighted on the DOE Office of Science page.
- Dr. Francesco Bertucci joined the department as a postdoctoral research associate working with Dr. James Bonifacio. His PhD is from the University of Pisa and his work is on conformal field theories. He will be with the department for the next 3 years.
- Drs. Gavin Davies and Cecille Labuda gave invited talks at SESAPS 2024 at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte.
- Dr. Anuradha Gupta gave a Science Café talk titled "Listening to the Symphony of the Universe" on October 15.
- Emily Hollowell joined the department as our new administrative assistant in the front office. Welcome Emily!
- Dr. Nathan K. Johnson-McDaniel, a postdoctoral associate working with Dr. Anuradha Gupta, won a 2024 American Physical Society (APS) Reviewer Excellence Award. Recipients of the Reviewer Excellence 2024 Award are those who have made exceptional contributions that are instrumental to peer review at the Physical Review journals and consistently helped to uphold the high standards of the journals. The list of awardees can be found here.
- Dr. Cecille Labuda was elected Secretary of the SESAPS Executive Committee. She wishes to thank all who voted for her.
- Dr. Nicholas MacDonald was one of several faculty from various universities featured in an article in the October 2024 Physics Today called "Early-career faculty face many challenges".

#### Events

- Spooky Physics Night will be tonight (November 1) with Dr. Jake Bennett as the main organizer of the event. A promotional video for the event produced by Dr. Akshay Khadse can be viewed here.
- The department tennis group meets in an ad hoc fashion on a continuing basis for doubles and singles matches. Anyone interested in playing tennis can get involved by joining the Slack tennis group. No prior experience is required. Just go and have fun!