



# UM Department of Physics and Astronomy

## WINTER ISSUE: JANUARY 1, 2025

### DEPARTMENT NEWS

#### STUDENT NEWS

##### **Purnima Narayan: Winner of the 2024 3MT Competition**

Purnima won the 2024 3MT Competition from a field of 21 contestants in the final round. Purnima will go on to represent UM at the regional competition in Dallas, TX in March 2025. Sina Rostami (as well as Purnima) progressed to the final round from a field of 83 contestants.

##### **Aniket Khairnar and Guoqin Liu: Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships**

Aniket and Guoqin were nominated and selected for Spring 2025 Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships. The fellowships relieve students of assistantship obligations so that they can concentrate on completing their dissertations.

##### **Noah Knutson: EDIT Symposium**

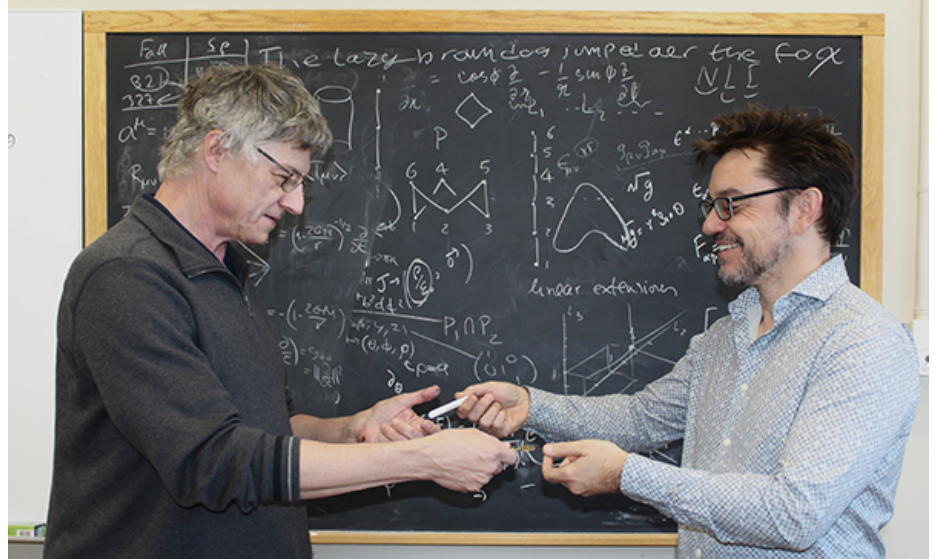
Noah Knutson was selected to attend the Excellence in Detector and Instrumentation Technologies (EDIT) at Fermi National Lab from November 11 - 22. EDIT is targeted to researchers in their graduate studies or first postdoctoral year seeking deeper knowledge on detectors and instrumentation.

##### **Guoqin Liu, Sina Rostami and Jack Wang: Conference Talks**

Guoqin and Jack gave talks at the APS Division of Fluid Dynamics conference (from November 24 - 26). Sina gave a talk at the Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (from November 18 - 22).

#### ALUMNI NEWS

Bryce Barrett gave a talk based on his honors thesis (which was directed by Dr. Joel Mobley), at the 187th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America which took place from November 18 - 22. Bryce is currently an intern at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.



Outgoing chair, Luca Bombelli, hands over the chair's special master key and receives a stick of chalk from incoming chair, Kevin Beach. (photo credit, Emily Hollowell)

#### General Department News

- Dr. Luca Bombelli has stepped down after completing two terms as department chair, effective December 31, 2024. His leadership and hard work advancing the department's mission in teaching, research and service are greatly appreciated. Our thanks to Dr. Bombelli and congratulations on a job well done.
- Dr. Kevin Beach was selected as the new department chair effective January 1, 2025. Congratulations to Dr. Beach as he starts his first term.
- Dr. Nicholas McDonald was awarded a National Science Foundation Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) grant. The grant will be used to support collaboration with the Boston University Blazar Group and to conduct blazar observations using the Perkins Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. See the UM Faculty Newsletter [here](#).
- Deb Livingston, our building custodian, was selected by the UM Staff Council as the 12/2024 Staff Member of the Month for her outstanding work keeping Lewis Hall sparkling clean.

#### Events

- Spooky Physics Night 2024 was a great success! Dr. Jake Bennett led the organization with Drs. Bin Xiao and Gavin Davies running the low temperature show and Ray Siedlecki and Thomas Jamerson hosting the main show. Dr. Joel Mobley ran the Acoustics Room and Dr. Akshay Khadse developed and ran a new event, the laser maze which was a huge hit. The hard work of the students, postdocs and others contributed to the success of the event.
- The Astronomy Public Talk series, organized by Dr. Anuradha Gupta, continued with a talk on November 10<sup>th</sup> given by Subhayu Bagchi. The talk titled "The Night the Stars Fell", was about the centuries-old history of the Leonid meteor shower. Along with the talk, there was a telescope-viewing session at Kennon Observatory.
- Upcoming in March 2025: the 11<sup>th</sup> Gulf Coast Gravity Meeting organized by Drs. Anuradha Gupta and Leo Stein.
- SPS meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm in Lewis 104. Those unable to attend due to conflicts or just interested in keeping up with SPS activities can join the SPS GroupMe.
- Happy New Year to all!

