New Faces

Jan Budaj (Research Associate)
Dante Minniti (Visiting Associate Professor)
David Sanchez (Systems Engineer - LOTIS)
Armando Alvarado (General Maintenance Mechanic - Safford)
John Aspacher (Staff Technician Sr - SOML)
Miwa Block (Research Specialist - IR)
Laura Forsyth (Office Specialist)
Brian Waggoner (General Maintenance Mechanic - MGIO)
Gary Gray (General Maintenance Mechanic - MGIO)
Davy Jones (Labor Crew Supervisor - MGIO)

Transfers

Tim Axelrod (Astronomer)
Dale Webb (Safety Officer)
Brian Love (Staff Tech Sr)
Jane Rigby (Postdoc Fellow-IR)

Sabbaticals

Academic Year 2006 - 2007

Jim Liebert will be working on a book about white dwarf stars, which he is writing with Dr. H.M. Van Horn of the U. of Rochester.

Ann Zabludoff will be analyzing data from the IMACS spectrograph on the Magellan telescopes in Chile to discover how galaxies get their baryons. She will be working at the Kavli Institute at UC Santa Barbara and at NYU.

Dennis Zaritsky will be working at the Kavli Institute at UC Santa Barbara and at NYU on optimal information abstraction from astronomical imaging data.

Roger Angel was awarded the 2006 Joseph Weber Award from the American Astronomical Society for Astronomical Instrumentation. The society cited Roger’s “superlative work spanning two decades on the development of a new generation of large telescopes, his establishment of the Steward Observatory Mirror Lab and a host of extraordinary conceptual ideas that have been turned into practical engineering solutions for astronomy.”

Rob Kennicutt was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences. Although Rob is in transition to his new appointment as Plumian Professor at Cambridge University, much of his distinguished career has been spent at Steward Observatory. We are all delighted by this recognition he has earned through his many contributions to astronomy.

Jim Liebert was given an Associate Membership in the Royal Astronomical Society. Only 3 such memberships are awarded annually in astronomy.

Frank Low was awarded the Catherine Wolfe Bruce Gold Medal by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific for lifetime achievement in astronomy. In addition, the National Radio Astronomical Observatory has announced that Frank will deliver the Jansky Lectures for 2006.

George Rieke received the Henry and Phyllis Koffler Prize for outstanding accomplishments in Research.

Marcia Rieke and Chris Impey were named Galileo Circle Fellows, the highest award the UA College of Science can bestow on its faculty. Four recipients within the College are identified each year to receive this award.

Tim Slater was elected to the position of Education Officer for the American Astronomical Society.

Dennis Zaritsky was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2006. The prestige of the Guggenheim extends across the humanities and sciences, and Dennis is this year’s only awardee from the UA and the only one pursuing research in astronomy.

Kurtis Williams received the William Lucas Jr. Award for junior faculty in Astronomy. The award is overseen by the San Diego Astronomy Association.

Simon “Pete” Worden (Brigadier General USAF, retired) was appointed Director of the NASA Ames Research Center. Pete took up his new appointment on May 4th. We look forward to working with him in his new role.

Janice Lee was awarded a Hubble Fellowship that she will take to the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO) in Tucson, AZ.

Chris Groppi, DeWayne Halphen, and Kurtis Williams received Astronomy and Astrophysics Fellowships from the National Science Foundation. Chris will remain at the Steward Observatory Radio Astronomy Laboratory. DeWayne will remain at Steward at the Arizona Radio
his colleagues have taken spectra of 20,000 objects with Hectospec, a 300-optical-fiber robotic spectrograph on the MMT.

Michael Lloyd-Hart of UA’s Center for Astronomical Adaptive Optics and Christopher Baranec of UA’s College of Optical Sciences described the evolution of their adaptive optics system in “Multi-Laser-Guided Adaptive Optics - Science Goals - Status and Results.”

Steward astronomer Daniel Eisenstein and his colleagues reported on their work on x-ray and infrared properties of active galactic nuclei (AGN), and using AGN’s to map cosmic structure.

In the area of extrasolar planet detection, CfA researchers Scott Gaudi and Joel Hartman presented their results from using Megacam to perform a high-precision transit survey for “hot Jupiters and hot Neptunes.”

Steward astronomer Jill Bechtold reported on the development of a new instrument called MAESTRO, the MMT Advanced Echelle Spectrograph.

Materials from the scientific presentations can be viewed at http://www.mmto.org/symposium/

The MMT has an interesting and colorful history. The 4.5-meter multiple mirror telescope was the third largest optical telescope in the world when originally dedicated in 1979. It featured six 1.8-meter telescopes working as one, the first co-rotating building, and the first computer-controlled altitude-azimuth mount. The telescope has evolved with new advances in telescope technology. The single 6.5-meter mirror was installed in 2000, doubling its light-gathering power. Smithsonian scientists developed a spectrograph that can take data on up to 300 galaxies at a time, and a camera that can take images of objects as large as the full moon. University of Arizona scientists designed the adaptive optics secondary mirror for the telescope, to enable astronomers to directly detect planets around other stars.

http://www.mmto.org/