



Zachary Griggs »

ASTROPHYSICS

STARSTRUCK. THAT'S A FITTING DESCRIPTION for Zachary Griggs. This self-professed "star nut" came to the College because it's the only university in South Carolina with an undergraduate degree in astrophysics. Zach wants to work in stellar instrumentation and telescopes, and he's getting the perfect preparation for that.

So far, "Experimental Astronomy" has been Zach's favorite class in the major. "It's taught by a professor who specializes in various areas of stellar research," he says, "but his focus is the direct imaging of extra solar planets, which is really

interesting. Also, students have a lot of freedom in that class."

Another highlight for Zach was a course entitled "NASA Space Mission Design," in which students work in teams to develop all the aspects of a space mission. Ultimately, their design is judged by professionals in that field.

"That class is a lot of fun. You work with students from another university, and it's open to students from any discipline, so you learn how to work with people outside your major. It was also good because I met professors from the other university and it's one of the places I'm considering for graduate school. But having your work judged by people from NASA or Boeing, that's important exposure for any student."

Like so many students in this department, Zach has spent a lot of time working as a research assistant. "The professors are amazingly accessible. If I have a question about the work, the professor directing my research will respond via email within the hour."

For Zach, that's the best thing about this major – the faculty who teach in the department. "Every professor here is big on getting students involved in research, and no matter what area of astrophysics you're interested in, you'll find someone here to work with who is focused on that area. 📡



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OUR DEPARTMENT OFFERS BOTH A B.S. IN ASTROPHYSICS AND A B.A. IN ASTRONOMY. OUR FACULTY'S EXPERTISE RANGES WIDELY 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, WHICH PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT RESEARCH. ALL ASTROPHYSICS MAJORS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT.

» EIGHT PROFESSORS ACTIVELY CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ASTROPHYSICS.

» OUR DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATES IN A SHARED NETWORK OF TELESCOPES SITUATED AROUND THE GLOBE.