



PHYSICS COLLOQUIUM: Software Development, Collaboration, and Removing Barriers to Access in Astronomy

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About The Speaker:

Kelle Cruz is an Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the Hunter College and a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). She is an observational astronomer focusing on the study of very low mass stars and brown dwarfs. She received both her Bachelors and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was an NSF Graduate Research Fellow. She was an NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellow at AMNH and a Spitzer Postdoctoral Fellow at Caltech. She recently served on the Board of the American Astronomical Society, the National Academy's panel on Best Practices for a Future Open Code Policy for NASA Space Science, and the Enabling Foundations Panel of the Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey. She is also the founder and Editor-in-Chief of the AstroBetter blog and wiki and serves on the Coordination Committee of the Astropy Project.

Date:

10/30/2020

Time:

10:30 AM-11:50 AM

Link:

Please email
snsgradstaff@ucmerced.edu
for Zoom link and passcode.

Abstract:

In this talk, I will highlight the aspects of US professional astronomy which are lowering the barriers to participation. In addition to describing the layout of the astronomical community, I aim to provide practical information which will help junior astronomers and their mentors to navigate this unique landscape. I will discuss the role of blogs and social media in providing access to the unwritten rules of the field and support to isolated scientists. I will also describe the opportunities presented by the rise of code sharing and community software development practices which have been made possible by GitHub, and exemplified by the Astropy Project. I will showcase examples of institutional leadership by federal agencies, observatories, and professional organizations which have expanded access to astronomical data and training. Finally, I will briefly describe how the current Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey process has the potential to impact even greater cultural change for US Astronomy in the decade to come.

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