



Steward Observatory Newsletter

May News



Congratulations Haowen, Logan and Haley!!

Spring 2024 College of Science Graduate Student Award Recipients

The College of Science recognizes and awards outstanding graduate students in three categories

Scholarship, Service, and Teaching.

We are proud of our three Astronomy students receiving awards this year.

Left: Haowen Zhang, Graduate Student of the Year & Scholarship Award Recipient

Center: Logan Pearce, Service Award Recipient

Right: Haley Bowden, Teaching Award Recipient

[Learn more](#)



Congratulations to Mount Lemmon SkyCenter on being ranked #1 by the “Space Tourism Guide” in their 2024 list of “The 10 Best Observatories in the U.S. to Visit in 2024.”

For those of you who know and love astronomy, it should come as no surprise that the [Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter](#) outside Tucson – one of the nation’s best cities for limiting light pollution –, Arizona – one of the nation’s best states for protecting dark skies – tops the list.

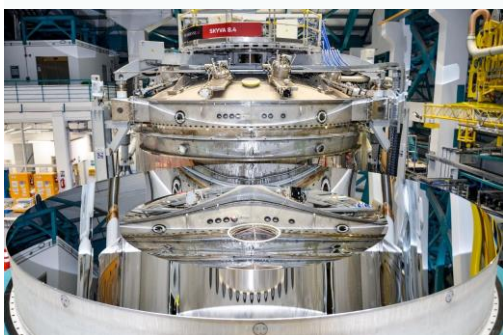
Operated by the University of Arizona, the SkyCenter is a real gem for astronomy enthusiasts. It’s home to two of the largest telescopes available to the public anywhere in the Southwest: the Schulman 32” and the Phillips 24” telescopes – and during the **five-hour SkyNights** programs they offer, you’ll have plenty of time to learn about and gaze through both. [Read the full article here.](#)



Steward Observatory’s Dr. Daniel Apai Receives Lifetime Honor for Distinguished Contributions to Astrobiology and Astrophysics

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), has announced its newest class of AAAS Fellows, which includes Steward Observatory’s Professor of Astronomy and Planetary Sciences Daniel Apai.

Dr. Apai becomes a AAAS Fellow in the 150th year of their program in recognition of his “distinguished contributions to the field of astrobiology and astrophysics, particularly for advancements in our understanding of habitable exoplanets and planetary systems.” His work on extrasolar planets and astrobiology is advancing the field toward the statistical assessment of the properties and potential inhabitation of Earth-like planets. [Learn more](#)



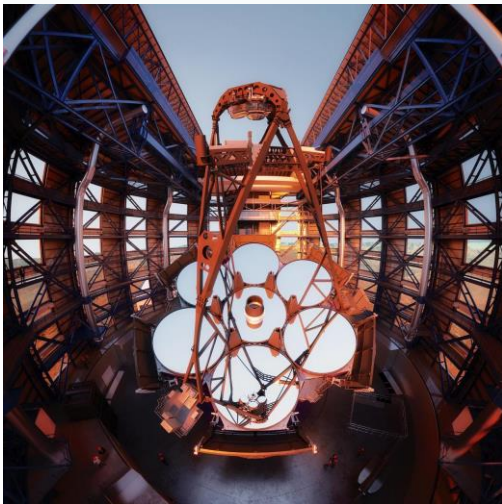
Rubin Observatory Achieves Another Major Milestone: Reflective Coating of the 8.4-meter Primary/Tertiary Mirror Built at the Richard F. Caris Mirror Lab

Seventeen years ago, under the UArizona football stadium, technicians at the [Richard F. Caris Mirror Lab](#) began carefully hand-loading borosilicate glass into the enormous furnace that would cast two colossal, concentric mirrors in a 51,900-pound mirror blank—the first time a combined primary and tertiary mirror had ever been produced on such a large scale. On April 27, 2024—after a meticulous multi-year process of polishing and a five-week ocean voyage to Chile—the 8.4-meter Primary/Tertiary Mirror (M1M3) for the [Vera C. Rubin Observatory](#) received a brilliant reflective coat of protected silver: an essential step on its path toward capturing light from the distant cosmos. [Learn more](#)



Dr. Virginie Faramaz featured on the radio for her astronomy class for Tohono O’odham college students

On **March 26th**, Steward Observatory’s Dr. Virginie Faramaz talked with the Tohono O’odham Community College radio station about the introductory astronomy class she teaches for local members of the Tohono O’odham Nation, as well as for indigenous college students from as far away as Nebraska through the San Carlos Apache College. [Listen to radio interview](#)



Making Giant Mirrors from Stars

Chemical elements come full circle in the cycle of glass for the world’s largest optical mirrors, launching our view into the universe.

At 200 times more powerful than today’s best telescopes, scientists will use the Giant Magellan Telescope to study nearly all aspects of astrophysics—from searching for signs of life on distant exoplanets to investigating the cosmic origins of chemical elements. In fact, astronomers will study the very same explosive phenomena that created the elements necessary to fabricate the telescope. [Learn more](#)

[GMT: Fourth-Generation Technology Will Change the Future of Ground-Based Observing](#)

In the Spotlight



Graduating Student: Sarah Stamer

As she prepares to graduate with her B.S in Astronomy and B.S. in Physics, Sarah Stamer reflects on highlights from her time at Steward Observatory, including being a [2023 Astronaut Scholar](#) (the only one from University of Arizona). Her advice for future astronomy students: “Stay humble, work hard, and be kind.”

What brought you to Steward Observatory?

I grew up in Flagstaff, and learning and volunteering at Lowell Observatory was what motivated me to pursue astronomy. I decided to come to Steward for the incredible program that we have here and the warmer weather than what I grew up in. [Learn more](#)

James Webb Space Telescope News



Steward Observatory's Rebecca Levy is Second Author on a JWST Study That Probes the Messier 82 Starburst Galaxy

"This image shows the power of Webb. We can start to distinguish all of these tiny point sources, which enables us to acquire an accurate count of all the star clusters in this galaxy."

– Rebecca Levy, NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics, Postdoctoral Fellow at Steward Observatory

[Learn more](#)

*JWST's Near-Camera, or NIRCam, which was designed by a team led by **Marcia Rieke**, a Regents Professor in the UArizona Steward Observatory. The Mid-Infrared Camera (MIRI) was built in partnership with ESA, NASA, JPL and the University of Arizona, with Lead Scientist George Rieke, Regents' Professor, Steward Observatory and the University of Arizona.*

Public Evening Lecture Series

Spring 2024

If you miss a lecture -- view the video below

Apr. 29, 2024 - Dr. Kathyne Daniel, Steward Observatory

[Galactic Symphony: The Harmonic Evolution of our Milky Way Galaxy](#)

Apr. 15, 2024 - Prof. Christopher Cokinos, UA Dept. of English

[Still as Bright: An Illuminating History of the Moon from Antiquity to Tomorrow](#)

Mar. 25, 2024 - Dr. András Gaspar, Steward Observatory

[40 Years of Debris Disks](#)

Mar. 11, 2024 - Dr. Jeffrey Bennett, University of Colorado

[Pathway to a Post-Global Warming Future](#)

Mar. 4, 2024 - Dr. J. Roger Angel, Regents Professor, Steward Observatory

[50 Years at Steward: Optics for Astronomy and Now to Reverse Climate Change](#)

Feb. 19, 2024 - Dr. Marcia Rieke, Elizabeth Roemer Chair, Steward Observatory

[JWST: Two Years of Operations are Changing Astronomy](#)

Feb. 5, 2024 - Dr. Sean Linden, Steward Observatory

[A Cosmic Odyssey: The Epic Journey of the Milky Way Galaxy](#)

Jan. 22, 2024 - Dr. Christopher Walker & Abram Young, Steward Observatory

[What's Up with GUSTO?](#)

[More information](#)

[Astronomy Colloquia](#)

Other Astronomy Events

- Space Drafts: Astronomy Lectures - [learn more](#)

The events listed above are off campus astronomy activities we want you to be aware of and enjoy, if interested. These events are not part of the Department of Astronomy or Steward Observatory public outreach.

Friends of Steward Observatory

Our students are the next-generation of scientists who will be making the great discoveries in the future. Student success builds our world-class astronomy program that continues to stand out from our peers and expands Arizona's research horizons.

Our students are extremely grateful for your investment in Astronomy. To a student, every dollar is important. Your donation goes directly to help support our innovative students in the form of scholarships and summer research project needs.

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Your donation is tax deductible!

Thank you for your support.

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