

YASWANT DEVARAKONDA

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🌐 tx.ag/yaswantd

EDUCATION

Texas A&M University

PhD in Astronomy

May 2023

M.S. in Astronomy

December 2021

Applied Statistics Certificate

December 2021

Associate Certificate from the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning

July 2019

The University of Texas at Austin

B.S. in Astronomy

May 2018

B.S. in Physics

May 2018

POLICY EXPERIENCE

John N. Bahcall Public Policy Fellow

April 2023 - Current

American Astronomical Society

- Led discussions with Congressional members and staff on legislation affecting astronomy
- Communicated the issues and needs of the US astronomy community with federal agencies such as NASA, NSF, Department of Energy, Department of State, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Coordinated with industry, scientific organizations, and governmental agencies at the national and international level on interests relating to space commerce, science, and security
- Published monthly blog posts to update society members on policy related issues

Congressional Visits Day

American Astronomical Society

- Organized and led discussions with members of Congress and the Office of Science and Technology Policy on astronomy related issues 17-19 April 2023
- Participated in discussions with the Office of Science and Technology Policy on astronomy related issues 20 July 2022
- Participated in discussions with members of Congress on astronomy related issues 2-4 May 2022

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas A&M University

August 2020 - March 2023

Advisors: Dr. Peter Brown & Dr. Nicholas Suntzeff

- Developed a template fitting routine to estimate UV/optical dust extinction and K-corrections for SNe Ia
- Compared the UV and optical properties of SNe Ia light curves to provide statistical constraints on diversity and correlation across wavelength regimes
- Contributed to the first UV/optical Hubble diagram that uses Type Ia SNe in the Hubble flow using Swift UVOT and HST observations

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas A&M University

August 2018 - July 2020

Advisor: Dr. Jonelle Walsh

- Analyzed connections between SMBHs and their host galaxies for the MASSIVE survey
- Estimated contributions to the total mass of galaxies based on their stellar and dark matter components
- Created kinematic maps of galaxies based on IFU spectroscopy of their stellar populations

Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Texas at Austin

August 2015 - July 2018

Advisor: Dr. Steve Finkelstein

- Examined gravitationally lensed Lyman-Alpha emitting galaxies to fill out the faint end of the LAE luminosity function
- Led a team of 5 students in calibrating IFU spectrographs as part of the HETDEX survey
- Measured the point-spread function of DECam data as part of the HETDEX survey

SELECTED SCIENCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

- ASTR 102: Observational Astronomy, Texas A&M University

August 2019-May 2021

Teaching Assistant

- ASTR 111: Overview of Modern Astronomy (Lab), Texas A&M University
- AST 321: The Future of Humanity, University of Texas at Austin
- AST 309: The Lives and Deaths of Stars, University of Texas at Austin
- AST 301: Introduction to Astronomy, University of Texas at Austin

August 2018 - May 2019

January 2018 - May 2018

August 2017 - December 2017

August 2016 - May 2017

Astronomy on Tap BCS	August 2018 - May 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What's Up</i> Segment Host • Show Host (recurring) • Presenter (recurring) 	
Texas A&M Physics and Engineering Festival (Physics Fest)	April 2019 - April 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astronomy Demonstrations Co-Lead • Organized teams of undergraduate and graduate students to present demonstrations at a festival attended by 5,000 K-12 students 	
Painter Hall Observatory	January 2017 - July 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telescope Operator and Star Party Host 	

SELECTED SERVICE, ADVOCACY, AND LEADERSHIP

AggieNova Undergraduate Research Group	June 2022 - May 2023
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- Mentored a team of 4 undergraduate students in individual research projects

Mentoring and Advising Graduates in an Inclusive Community (MAGIC)	August 2019 - May 2023
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- Mentored first-year PhD students with regular meetings and professional development workshops

Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG)	
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- Advocacy Committee Co-Chair for Legislative Affairs June 2022 - May 2023
- Senator June 2020 - May 2023
- Wrote and Introduced GPSG Bill 55.07: *On the Accessibility of Menstrual Health Products on Campus*
- Participated in discussions to institute a university-wide minimum stipend for graduate student workers
- Organized a coalition of student groups to collectively advocate for the needs of marginalized communities to university administration
- Created a new program to help incoming international students acclimate

Graduates Learning Astronomy Skills Seminar (GLASS)	August 2020 - July 2022
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- Co-Chair, led professional development workshops for graduate students and postdocs

Society for the Underrepresented in Physics and Astronomy (SUPA)	August 2020 - July 2022
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- Co-Chaired organization focused on highlighting IDEA issues within the department and providing community support for marginalized people

Discover, Explore, and Enjoy Physics and Engineering (DEEP)	August 2020 - May 2022
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- Mentored a total of 7 undergraduates in creating educational demonstrations for K-12 students

SELECTED TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

IUA Symposium 385: Astronomy and Satellite Constellations: Pathways Forward, La Palma, Spain

- Session Chair: *International Law and National Policy* 5 October 2023
- Contributed Talk: *US Regulatory Updates* 4 October 2023

242nd Meeting of the American Astronomical Society, Albuquerque, New Mexico

- Dissertation Talk: *Determining the Intrinsic UV Colors of Type Ia Supernovae with SED Modeling* 6 June 2023

Science Seminar Series, University of Wisconsin-Madison

- Invited Talk: *Unlocking the Ultraviolet Properties of Type Ia Supernovae* 17 October 2022

Cook's Branch Supernova Symposium, Montgomery, TX

- Invited Talk: *Determining the Intrinsic UV Colors of Type Ia Supernovae with SED Modeling* 15 March 2023
- Invited Talk: *Early Light Curves of Type Ia SNe in the UV and Optical* 15 March 2022

ComSciCon Houston, Rice University

- Talk: *Type Ia SNe in the Ultraviolet* 5 March 2022

PUBLICATIONS

First Author

Comparisons of Type Ia Supernova Light Curves in the UV and Optical with the Swift Ultra-violet/Optical Telescope
Y. Devarakonda & P. J. Brown, *The Astronomical Journal*, Volume 163, Issue 6, id.258, 10 pp. (2022) [ADS](#)

Co-Author

A Swift Response to Newly Discovered, Nearby Transients

P. J. Brown, M. Robertson, Y. Devarakonda, E. Sarria, D. Pooley, and M. Stritzinger

Universe, Vol. 9, Issue 5, p. 218 (2023) [ADS](#)

The Spitzer-HETDEX Exploratory Large Area Survey. II. The Dark Energy Camera and Spitzer/IRAC Multiwavelength Catalog

I. G. B. Wold, L. Kawinwanichakij, M. L. Stevens, S. L. Finkelstein, C. Papovich, Y. Devarakonda, and 12 additional authors

The Astrophysical Journal Supplement Series, Volume 240, Issue 1, article id. 5, 21 pp. (2019) [ADS](#)

Contributing Author

The Hobby-Eberly Telescope Dark Energy Experiment (HETDEX) Survey Design, Reductions, and Detections

K. Gebhardt, E. Mentuch Cooper, R. Ciardullo, V, and 60 additional authors including Y. Devarakonda

The Astrophysical Journal, Volume 923, Issue 2, id.217, 39 pp. (2021) [ADS](#)

Doctoral Dissertation

Unveiling the Ultraviolet Properties of Type Ia Supernovae

Y. Devarakonda, Texas A&M University. [OAKTrust](#)

AAS Policy Blog

Impact of a Shutdown on Astronomy [Link](#)

19 September 2023

The Satellite and Telecommunications Streamlining Act: A Postmortem Analysis [Link](#)

22 August 2023

Understanding the FY24 Appropriations Bills [Link](#)

20 July 2023

A Letter to the Congressional Appropriations Leadership [Link](#)

13 June 2023

An In-Depth Look at the FY 2024 NASA Budget Request [Link](#)

7 May 2023

Introducing the New John N. Bahcall Public Policy Fellow [Link](#)

25 April 2023

Making the Case for the Future of Astronomy [Link](#)

8 August 2022