

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB's Tommaso Treu Awarded Prestigious Astronomy Prize

Tommaso Treu, associate professor of physics at UC Santa Barbara, has been awarded the 2010 Newton Lacy Pierce Prize by the American Astronomical Society (AAS), the largest organization of professional astronomers in North America.

According to a citation from the AAS, Treu was awarded the Pierce Prize "for his insightful work into the physical understanding of the formation and evolution of galaxies, groups and clusters, including the coupled evolution of the luminous, dark matter and black hole components."

"I feel surprised and honored," Treu said of the award.

The Newton Lacy Pierce Prize in Astronomy is awarded annually for outstanding achievement in observational astronomical research, based on measurements of radiation from an astronomical object. It is given to an astronomer who has not attained 36 years of age in the year designated for the award, and who is based at a North American institution.

"This prize recognizes the outstanding discoveries Tommaso has already made early in his career, and the impact they have had in the field of astronomy," said Michael Witherell, vice chancellor for research at UCSB. "He joins a very select group of astronomers who have won this prize over its history."

A Hubble Fellow at UCLA before joining the UCSB faculty in 2004, Treu received his Ph.D. in physics at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Italy. His many distinctions include a CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation, a Research Fellowship from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and a Research Fellowship from the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, all received in 2007.

In addition, Treu has been involved with the most advanced earth- and space-based telescopes in operation, including the W.M. Keck Observatory, the Hubble Space Telescope, the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, and the Spitzer Space Telescope. He also serves on the Science Frontier Panel "Galaxies Across Cosmic Time" of the Astro 2010 Decadal Survey, promoted by the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science.

Treu received UCSB's Harold J. Plous Award in 2008-09. The award is one of the university's most prestigious faculty honors, given annually to an assistant professor who has shown exceptional achievement in research, teaching, and service to the university. The award was established in 1957 to honor the memory of Harold J. Plous, an assistant professor of economics.

Treu will receive a cash award of an amount to be established by the AAS Council. He also will be invited to present a talk at a future meeting of the Society.

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