

PHYSICS NEWS FLASH

UTK Students Headed for "The Standard Model and Beyond"

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There may be no more appropriate place for a physicist than Einstein Drive in Princeton, and the physics department is sending two students there for "The Standard Model and Beyond," a summer program for graduate students and post-docs who specialize in particle physics and string theory.

James Alsup and Usama Al-Binni, Ph.D. students working under the direction of Professor George Siopsis, are among 100 or so participants selected for the program, which runs July 16-27 at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS). The 2007 summer school is designed to prepare young physicists for the next-generation physics expected from the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Situated on the outskirts of Geneva, the LHC is scheduled to deliver initial high-energy collisions in mid-2008 and will expand scientists' understanding of fundamental concepts in Nature, including dark matter and supersymmetry.

As members of the Siopsis Group, Alsup and Al-Binni proved to be excellent candidates for the program. The group studies black holes and other extended objects using string theory, which seeks to reconcile the theory of general relativity with quantum mechanics, a puzzle that stumped Albert Einstein himself. Summer school students are chosen by a committee that reviews applicants' academic history and experience with the subject matter. Participants will attend lectures, study groups, tutorials, and problem sessions during their 11-day stay at IAS, a top international center for theoretical research and intellectual pursuits. Since its founding in 1930, the institute has included many famous faculty members, including Einstein and mathematician Kurt Gödel.

James Alsup earned his bachelor's degree in engineering physics at UTK in 2005 before joining the graduate program. Usama Al-Binni holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Jordan and joined the Siopsis Group in 2005.