

Physics Faculty Winter Honors

December 6, 2013

New physics faculty members were introduced while others were recognized for outstanding research and academic outreach at the College of Arts and Sciences Winter Convocation, held December 4. Below are the descriptions from the College.

New Faculty

Nadia Fomin

Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy

Nadia Fomin earned a bachelor's degree in physics and computer science from Georgetown University and a PhD in physics from the University of Virginia. She previously was a postdoctoral

research associate at both UT and Los Alamos National Laboratory. Fomin's research covers fundamental neutron physics and short-range nuclear structure and medium modification of nucleon behavior. She conducts experiments at national facilities like the Spallation Neutron Source at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Virginia. Among her recent publications is a paper selected as an Editor's Suggestion in *Physical Review C*.

Anthony Mezzacappa

Newton W. and Wilma C. Thomas Endowed Chair in Theoretical and Computational Astrophysics

Anthony Mezzacappa earned a PhD at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2012, he was named director of the Joint Institute for Computational Sciences at UT and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). A leader in computational astrophysics and a pioneer in the field of supernova science, Mezzacappa joined ORNL in 1996 after holding positions at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a fellow of the American Physical Society, and in 1999 President Bill Clinton presented him with the Presidential Early Career Award in Science and Engineering.

Excellence in Faculty Research and Creative Achievement Award

Stefan Spanier, professor of physics and astronomy, is a recipient of the Senior Faculty Research and Creative Achievement Award. His research of high-energy particle physics requires a high degree of teamwork, which has paid off handsomely for Spanier because he is the only UT faculty member to be involved in the research that resulted in the discovery of the Higgs boson particle last year. The contributions of Spanier's research group were important in both building a detector and in analyzing data from the experiments that were conducted in Switzerland. Spanier received a PhD in physics from Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany. He joined the UT faculty in 2002.

Faculty Academic Outreach Awards

Jon Levin has been active in two areas of outreach teaching for many years. For the past five years, Levin has been addressing the well-documented acute shortage of accredited high-school physics teachers in East Tennessee. An innovative distance education program featuring "collaborative interaction" high-school physics classes delivered by Levin (or one of the five master's students he has supervised on this project) is conducted via videoconferencing facilities in the Department of Physics. The teachers learn physics along with their students at a pace that permits more profound understanding than does participating in abbreviated summer workshops. In addition, Levin has served



as faculty advisor to our local chapter of the Society of Physics Students, a professional association designed for physics students and their mentors. Our chapter is regularly named Outstanding Chapter by the national organization.

For a full list of Winter Convocation Honors, visit the College's **Winter Convocation Website** (<http://artsci.utk.edu/faculty-staff-resources/winter-convocation-2013/>).