



UGC: P. Sell, Dana Yaptanco, Savannah Still, Bella Macias, Pae Swanson, Grady Robbins and Chair, E.Lada  
From the Undergraduate Study Break and Award Ceremony

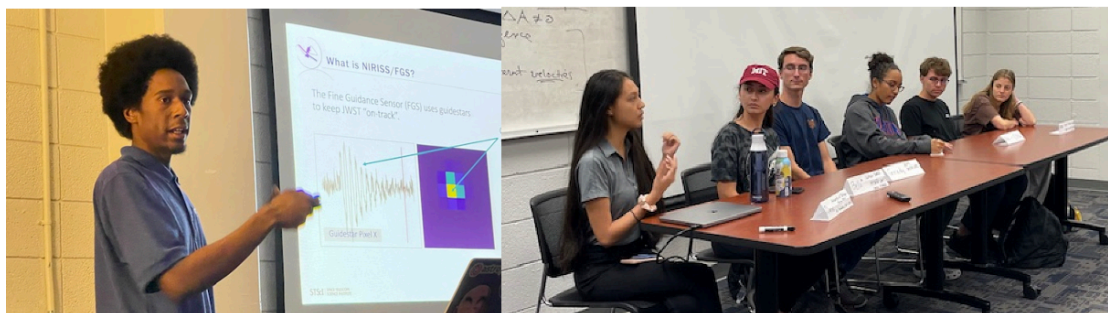
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Dear ASTRO Alums and Friends,

Giving Day is here and I am proud that UF Astronomy is a featured fund for the second year in a row! I invite our incredible community of supporters to make a gift of any size to the [Department of Astronomy](#) and make an impact in the lives of current and future Gators!

<https://givingday.ufl.edu/campaigns/astronomy-department-fund>

Last year, Giving Day donors took UF Astronomy to new heights. Funds raised in 2023 helped **launch new programs that are enhancing the student experience and fostering undergraduate research**, such as PULSAR (Promoting Undergraduate Learning and Studies in Astrophysics Research), an astronomy club founded by student Grady Robbins (pictured above, second from left) and Astronomy Department Chair Elizabeth Lada. Giving Day funds enabled the department to sponsor PULSAR activities like an ice cream social where students connected with professors and scientists to learn about research opportunities, a symposium for students to hone their presentation skills and an internship panel discussion.



Undergraduates, Bella Macias and Dana Yaptangco (also pictured above) founded a new mentoring program called WAAM! (Women in Astronomy and Astrophysics Mentoring) using funds from 2023 Giving Day. As part of this program, established juniors and senior ASTRO majors mentor incoming students in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. WAAM! is open to all students to be mentors or mentees and particularly encourages women participation. Funds were used to support activities such as getting to know you events and professional mentor training sessions.

Giving Day Funds supported a gallery showing of the amazing work of our students from our new Astrophotography course!

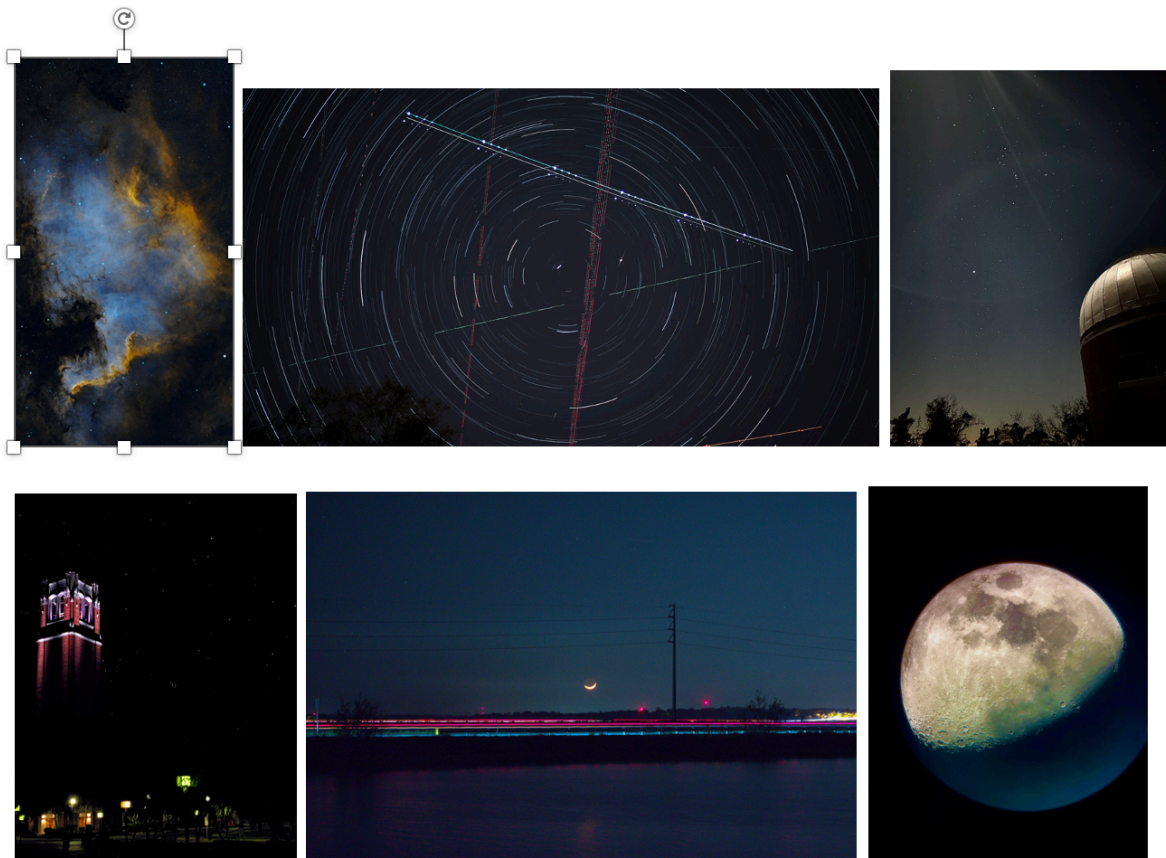
<https://news.clas.ufl.edu/new-tools-open-horizons-in-astronomy/>



Left: Astrophotography students setting up for a night of observing!

Right: Dean Richardson with astrophotography students at our gallery reception.





A sample of the awe inspiring work our students, A. McCormack, H. Phelan, S. Clark, T. Dorr-Kapcynski, and A. Mnatsakanyan (last 2) produced in our Astrophotography class!

Your donations supported student participation in professional meetings such as the American Astronomical Society (AAS) Meeting. Last year undergraduate major Sophie Clark presented her poster on the young cluster NGC 1977 at the 242<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the AAS in Albuquerque, NM and was one of 2 students to win the Chambliss Medal (<https://aas.org/posts/news/2023/06/congratulations-aas-242-chambliss-student-award-winners>)!

Funds from Giving Day were also used to enhance graduate student activities, such as our **Annual Graduate Student Symposium**, awards for the best student talks, awards for outstanding research, teaching and service, travel and participation of graduate students at professional meetings and pizza lunches for our graduates students to meet and network with special colloquium speakers and visitors.

Finally your donations helped to support inspiring outreach events such as our recent Open House at Rosemary Hill Observatory which hosted over 500 visitors! <https://news.clas.ufl.edu/rosemary-hill-observatory/>



On Giving Day, we rely on our alumni and friends to show their enthusiasm for the essential work we do. Join us as we celebrate all the opportunities that [the Department of Astronomy](https://givingday.ufl.edu/campaigns/astronomy-department-fund) creates for our UF students and the community!

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Thank you for your support!  
Elizabeth Lada  
Chair, UF ASTRO