

Z. Franklin Wang

Graduate Research Assistant
Texas A&M University

Education

Ph.D. Astronomy	Texas A&M University	2026 - Present
Advisor: Jonelle L. Walsh		
Project: <i>Dynamical Black Hole Mass Measurements in the Local Relics of Red Nugget Galaxies</i>		
M.S. Astronomy	Texas A&M University	2022 - 2026
Advisor: Jonelle L. Walsh		
Thesis: <i>A Stellar Dynamical Black Hole Mass Measurement in the Compact Galaxy PGC 12557</i>		
B.S. Astronomy Physics Minor	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2018 - 2022
Advisor: Xin Liu		
Undergraduate Research: <i>Optical Variability of Dwarf AGNs from the Zwicky Transient Facility</i>		

Academic Positions

Graduate Research Assistant	Texas A&M University	2024 - Present
Instructor on Record	Texas A&M University	2023 - 2024
Graduate Teaching Assistant	Texas A&M University	2022 - 2023
Undergraduate Research Assistant	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2020 - 2023
Undergraduate Research Assistant	The Chinese University of Hong Kong	2019 - 2020

Publications

A library of my publications can be found on [ADS](#).

First/Co-author:

1. Wang, Z. F., Burke, C. J., Liu, X., & Shen, Y. (2023).
Dwarf AGNs from variability for the origins of seeds (DAVOS): optical variability of broad-line dwarf AGNs from the Zwicky Transient Facility
Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, 521, 99.
[arXiv:2212.02321](#)

Contributing Author

2. Oelkers, R. J., et al. **including Wang, Z. F.** (2025).
Ground-based Reconnaissance Observations of 21 Exoplanet Atmospheres with the Exoplanet Transmission Spectroscopy Imager
The Astronomical Journal, 169, 134.
[arXiv:2503.03930](#)
1. Burke, C. J., et al. **including Wang, Z. F.** (2023).
Dwarf AGNs from variability for the origins of seeds (DAVOS): Intermediate-mass black hole demographics from optical synoptic surveys
Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, 518, 1880.
[arXiv:2207.04092](#)

Awarded Proposals and Grants

Principal Investigator

1

2026	GN-2026A-Q-214: Hunting for a Black Hole in the Ultracompact Dwarf Galaxy Virgo UCD 7	7.9 hours
------	---	-----------

Observing Experience

- **W. M. Keck Observatory** / Keck I / AO+OSIRIS IFU 3 nights, 2024 - 2025
- **McDonald Observatory** / 2.1m Otto Struve Telescope / ETSI 7 nights, Apr. 2023
- **McDonald Observatory** / 2.7m Harlan J. Smith Telescope / VIRUS-W IFU 3 nights, Feb. 2023

Research Presentations

(bold = invited)

Conference Talk:

4. *Dynamical black hole mass measurements in the local relics of red nugget galaxies* Cosmic Nuggets II, Sexten Center for Astrophysics 4 February 2026

Talk:

3. *Tracing Black Hole Evolution with Red Nuggets and Compact Relics* Physics Journal Club, Hong Kong University 30 December 2024

Conference Poster:

2. *A Gemini Large & Long Program: Stellar Kinematics from Nearby Galaxies* Bashfest 2023, University of Texas at Austin 30 October 2023

Talk:

1. *Optical Variability of Dwarf AGN from the Zwicky Transient Facility* Extragalactic Lunch, Texas A&M University 9 March 2023

Honors and Awards

Jan. 2024	Texas Space Grant Consortium Graduate Fellow	Texas A&M
Fall 2018, 2020	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Dean's List	UIUC
Aug. 2019	Nancy Chong Whitman Scholarship	UIUC
Jan. 2019	James Scholar Honors Program	UIUC
Jan. 2019	Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society	UIUC

Mentoring, Professional Service, & Outreach

RESEARCH MENTORING

William Lande Niles West High School, Skokie, IL	2021 - 2022
--	-------------

POSITIONS

Adopt-a-Physicist Participant / Correspondent	2024, 2026
---	------------

Mentoring and Advising Graduates in an Inclusive Community (MAGIC)

Primary Coordinator / Mentor

2024 - Present

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

Chief Organizer and Coordinator

2023 - Present

PUBLIC TALKS / MEDIA APPEARANCES

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

16. *Colonialism, But In Space!*
The 101, Bryan, TX Aug. 2025

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

15. *Space: An Imperfect, Infinite Laboratory*
The 101, Bryan, TX Feb. 2025

Texas A&M Society of Physics Students

14. *Graduate Student Panel Member*
College Station, TX Nov. 2024

Texas A&M 3 Minute Thesis Competition

13. *What Came First, the Galaxy or the Black Hole?*
College Station, TX Oct. 2024

KBTX News 3 at Noon ([link](#))

12. *Science and Beer! Astronomy on Tap in Downtown Bryan*
Bryan, TX Oct. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

11. *Stellar Dynamical Modeling for Beginners*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Aug. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

10. *Don't Look Up!*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Jul. 2024

AggieSTAAR Research Seminar for Undergraduates

9. *How to Weigh a Supermassive Black Hole*
College Station, TX Jun. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

8. *For All, Into the Starfield*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Mar. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

7. *The Problem with Infinity*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Jan. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

6. *Don't Look Up!*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Jul. 2024

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

5. *Professional Stargazing: Getting Science from an Observatory*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Oct. 2023

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

4. *Is Looking for Extraterrestrial Life Worth It?*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Jun. 2023

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

3. *The Black Holes of our Universe*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Mar. 2023

Brazos Valley Astronomy Club

2. *How to Weigh a Supermassive Black Hole*
TAMU Campus Observatory, College Station, TX Feb. 2023

Astronomy on Tap, Bryan-College Station

1. *Things That Go Bump in the Night: Killer Worlds and the Deep Unknown Dark*
The Grand Stafford Theatre, Bryan, TX Oct. 2022

Extracurricular Activities

- **Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity** / Recruitment Chairman 2020 - 2022
- **Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity** / Chapter President 2019 - 2021
- **Epsilon Eta Environmental Honors Fraternity** / Volunteer 2019 - 2020
- **Eco-Olympics** / Volunteer 2019
- **Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity** / Philanthropy Chairman 2018 - 2019
- **Illinois Men's Rugby Football Club** / Player 2018 - 2020