

Z. Franklin Wang

Graduate Research Assistant
Texas A&M University

Education

Ph.D. Astronomy	Texas A&M University	2026 - Present
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Advisor: Jonelle L. Walsh

Project: *Dynamical Black Hole Mass Measurements in the Local Relics of Red Nugget Galaxies*

M.S. Astronomy	Texas A&M University	2022 - 2026
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Advisor: Jonelle L. Walsh

Thesis: *A Stellar Dynamical Black Hole Mass Measurement in the Compact Galaxy PGC 12557*

B.S. Astronomy Physics Minor	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2018 - 2022
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Advisor: Xin Liu

Undergraduate Research: *Optical Variability of Dwarf AGNs from the Zwicky Transient Facility*

Academic Positions

Graduate Research Assistant	Texas A&M University	2024 - Present
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Instructor on Record	Texas A&M University	2023 - 2024
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Graduate Teaching Assistant	Texas A&M University	2022 - 2023
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Undergraduate Research Assistant	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	2020 - 2023
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Undergraduate Research Assistant	The Chinese University of Hong Kong	2019 - 2020
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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: <i>Hunting for a Black Hole in the Ultracompact Dwarf Galaxy Virgo UCD 7</i>	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
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POSITIONS

Adopt-a-Physicist Participant / Correspondent	2024, 2026
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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