

Samuel Solod

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EDUCATION

- **DePaul University**

Bachelor of Science in Astrophysics, Minor in Mathematics; Cumulative GPA: 3.92/4.0

Chicago, IL

Expected June 2026

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- **California Institute of Technology Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship**

Principal Investigators: Dr. Elias Most, Dr. Yoonsoo Kim

Pasadena, CA

June 2025 – Present

- **Adaptive Mesh Refinement in AthenaK:** Implemented adaptive mesh refinement (AMR) criteria in the GPU-accelerated astrophysical code AthenaK, targeting accretion disk–jet systems. Designed a refinement trigger based on a five-point finite-difference approximation of the fourth derivative to detect high-frequency oscillations in primitive variables, enabling up to 7 refinement levels in critical regions and $\sim 3.7\times$ computational speedups while preserving physical accuracy.
- **High-Performance Computing:** Automated parameter sweeps on 64 CPUs and 8 NVIDIA GPUs, benchmarking refinement efficiency on simplified hydrodynamical problems prior to application in general relativistic magnetohydrodynamic (GRMHD) simulations of highly magnetized black holes.
- **Research Output:** Produced a final research paper and presented results at Caltech’s Summer Seminar Day.
- **Professional Training:** Attended Caltech Relativistic Astrophysics Summer School (June 2025), engaging in advanced lectures and tutorials on numerical relativity, MHD, plasma physics, and computational methods

- **Northwestern CIERA Research Experience for Undergraduates**

Principal Investigators: Dr. Alexander Tchekhovskoy, Dr. Deepika Bollimpalli

Evanston, IL

June 2024 – Jan 2025

- **GRMHD Simulations:** Ran 2D and 3D simulations of black hole accretion disks using the HARMPI code on Northwestern’s Quest cluster (32 cores, >2 TB of data).
- **Pipeline Development:** Built a Python-based analysis pipeline to extract mass accretion rates and perform Fourier analysis of temporal variability in accretion flows, enabling quantitative characterization of GRMHD simulation outputs.
- **Research Impact:** Investigated variability signatures in accretion flows and their connection to observed aperiodic variability in X-ray binaries. Authored a final paper and presented at the American Astronomical Society 245th Meeting and Northwestern CIERA symposiums.

- **DePaul University**

Independent and Faculty-Supervised Research

Chicago, IL

2023 – 2025

- **Independent Study (2025):** Self-taught general relativity under faculty supervision, focusing on the Einstein field equations.
- **Protoplanetary Disks (2023):** Analyzed archival VLBA data on protoplanetary disk morphology and accretion processes; gained experience in radio astronomy data reduction and visualization.
- **Magnetic Fields of W3(OH) (2024):** Reviewed Zeeman diagnostics of astrophysical magnetic fields and examined the role of the VLBA in probing star-forming regions.

PRESENTATIONS

- **Oral Presentations**

- **Caltech Summer Seminar Day:** *Grid refinement criterion for general relativistic magnetohydrodynamic simulations*
- **Northwestern CIERA Symposium:** *Radial coherence in accretion disks around black holes*

- **Poster Presentations**

- **American Astronomical Society, 245th Meeting:** *Radial coherence in accretion disks around black holes*
- **Northwestern CIERA Symposium:** *Radial coherence in accretion disks around black holes*
- **DePaul University STEM Showcases:** 2023, 2024

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- **DePaul Astrophysics Society**

President

Chicago, IL

Sep 2023 – Present

- **Leadership:** Founded and grew the society to 40+ active members in its first year.
- **Event Organization:** Organized seminars, workshops, guest lectures, and career panels to promote learning, networking, and professional development.
- **Peer Mentorship:** Established a mentorship system to support students pursuing astrophysics careers.

- **Society of Physics Students**

Member

Chicago, IL

Sep 2022 – Present

- **Networking:** Participated in meetings and events to engage with the broader physics community.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Programming Languages:** Python, C++, MATLAB, Bash, LaTeX
- **Parallelization and HPC:** Kokkos, SLURM, MPI, OpenMP
- **Astrophysical Codes:** AthenaK, HARMPI
- **Version Control and Tools:** Git, CMake, GNU, NumPy, SciPy, Matplotlib, Pandas

GRANTS AND FUNDING

- **Caltech Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF):** Supported by Caltech SURF funds raised annually from faculty grants, corporate sponsors, and institute resources.
- **National Science Foundation REU Grant (AST-2149425):** Supported by the NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program at CIERA, Northwestern University.
- **Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP):** Received internal research funding from DePaul University.
- **NASA Illinois Space Grant Consortium (ISGC):** Funded research under the supervision of Dr. Bernhard Beck-Winchatz.