

Physics and Space Sciences Department Colloquium

The Pluto System, the Haumea System, and Beyond



Last summer, the world was awestruck with complex and incredible high-resolution images of Pluto and its moons from NASA's New Horizons spacecraft. Launched 10 years ago to the edge of the solar system, New Horizons arrival at Pluto was an engineering masterpiece, but is also providing us with instant new insights on Pluto and its moons, particularly the large moon Charon. I will discuss these new images, some early scientific interpretation, and implications for understanding the Pluto-Charon system. New Horizons is still actively returning Pluto data acquired last July and I'll provide an insider's update on New Horizon's upcoming proposed extended mission to fly by the Kuiper Belt Object 2014 MU69. I will also provide an update on Haumea, one of Pluto's dwarf planet "cousins", including new images from the Hubble Space Telescope that imply new mysteries. Even without a dedicated space mission, Haumea, its two moons, and its collisional family of shiny iceballs are scientifically rich and I might even convince you that Haumea is even more intriguing than Pluto. :)



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Friday, Sept 18, 2015
4:00 – 5:00PM
OPS Room 140

Light refreshments will be provided