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Shandera appointed director of Institute for Gravitation and the Cosmos

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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — The Internal Advisory Board of the Penn State Institute for Gravitation and the Cosmos (IGC) has selected Sarah Shandera, associate professor of physics, as the IGC's new director.



Sarah Shandera **IMAGE: PENN STATE**

The ICG is a multidisciplinary institute dedicated to the study of the most-fundamental structure and constituents of the universe. It is comprised of the Center for Fundamental Theory, the Center for Theoretical and Observational Cosmology, and the Center for Multimessenger Astrophysics. The mission of the ICG is to foster the highest-quality education and research in cosmology, general relativity, gravitational-wave astronomy, particle astrophysics, quantum gravity, and string theory, focusing on the highest-energy phenomena and fundamental issues in the science of the cosmos. As director of the ICG, Shandera will work with its members to communicate the ICG's shared scientific vision while supporting its three centers. Shandera also holds a vision for the ICG that fosters bridging the growing quantum information science and technology community at Penn State.

"I am thrilled by the opportunity to lead the Institute for Gravitation and the Cosmos," Shandera said. "It has a long history of high-impact science and a stellar group of faculty at the forefront of discovery today. I look forward to serving them in this role

as we strengthen the community at the institute and seek the next frontiers in the physics and astronomy of the universe."

Shandera has been the recipient of the Emmy Noether Visiting Fellowship at the Perimeter Institute in 2015, the Eberly College of Science Alumni Society's C.I. Noll Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2019, a New Initiatives grant from the Charles E. Kaufman Foundation in 2019, a Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation Fundamental Physics Innovation Convening Award in 2020, and various research grants from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation. She also has been honored as an invited speaker at several universities and conferences and has published more than 40 papers in scientific journals. In conjunction with her research, Shandera is in her fifth year as a mentor for the Supernova Foundation, which encourages young women to pursue careers in physics.

"I am confident that Sarah's leadership will elevate the IGC to even higher levels of achievement in research and education, and strengthen community and collaboration among its members," said Tracy Langkilde, Verne M. Willaman Dean of the Eberly College of Science. "I am excited to begin working with her in this capacity."

Shandera joined Penn State as an assistant professor in 2011 and was promoted to associate professor in 2018. Prior to that, she was a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University and the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. She earned a doctoral degree in physics at Cornell University in 2006 and bachelor's degrees in physics and math from the University of Arizona in 2001.

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