



News

Mostafá honored with Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Award



Gail McCormick

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Miguel Mostafá, professor of physics and of astronomy and astrophysics and associate dean for research and innovation, is one of three members of the Eberly College of Science to receive the Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Award in 2022. The award was created in 2019 to honor faculty members in the college for their outstanding work in mentoring students, postdocs, and faculty.

Mostafá was recognized for his stellar record of mentoring individuals at the undergraduate, graduate, postdoc, and most recently, junior faculty level. He leads by example, investing time and energy in the service of his mentees. According to one nominator, he “genuinely cares about the well-being and development of his mentees, encouraging them through difficult times, helping them maintain self-efficacy, and providing perspective and specific career advice.”

“He helps his mentees develop ideas constructively,” said another nominator. “For example, by brainstorming one-on-one and in group meetings, suggesting a diverse perspective, and always providing prompt and detailed feedback on their own ideas.”

Mostafá also encourages his mentees to take advantage of professional development opportunities, and many of his undergraduate and graduate students have gone on to win scholarships, participate in off-campus research experiences, and be accepted to excellent graduate programs or pursue postdoctoral research.

His mentoring is not limited to members of his own research group. For example, Mostafá is a faculty mentor for students in the **Women in Science and Engineering Research (WISER)** and **Minority Undergraduate Research Experience (MURE)** programs for **NASA's Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium**. He is also the faculty adviser of the **Latin American Graduate Student Association** at Penn State, and he has served as a mentor to many students from underrepresented groups at Penn State through the **Millennium Scholars Program** and **Summer Research Opportunities Program**.



[BACK TO TOP](#)

Notably, Mostafá also mentors postdocs, providing training not only in research skills, but also in the transition to a career as independent researchers. He also helps junior faculty with their own early career development, including by providing advice on grant proposals, teaching, and managing a large research group. Importantly, Mostafá uses the opportunity to teach his mentees how to be good mentors themselves.

"I have not seen another colleague more worthy of such an award," added a nominator.

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