

Placing Humanity in a Cosmic Context



Brad Hansen
Professor, Physics and Astronomy

CURRENT RESEARCH

Understanding where planets come from and if habitable life elsewhere is possible

For centuries, astronomers have pondered how our planet was formed and how life came to be. Due to the large and challenging nature of these questions, it will take a long time and many people to properly answer them. However, journeys are composed of small steps and researchers today are taking some of these first steps towards understanding our universe. Dr. Brad Hansen, of the University of California, Los Angeles, hopes to understand how and where planets form, and what determines the conditions on a given planet. Using both theory, large scale computation and observation, Dr. Hansen's holistic approach to understanding planets holds promise for exciting and innovative findings. Therefore, through the desire to find and characterize planets around other stars, we will have a better perspective of our place in the Universe.

Dr. Hansen's work to combine both observational and theoretical techniques helps to provide a comprehensive analysis of the planet formation problem. More specifically, Dr. Hansen's work may address genuine scientific questions as to how to put our solar system into the context of the other solar systems. We now know of many planetary systems that do not look like ours and placing our own solar system within this broader framework can explain how habitable planets come about and what conditions are necessary for this to happen. Dr. Hansen's research offers a context for whether other life-bearing planets like Earth can exist. With this lens, Dr. Hansen's research embraces the idea that it is necessary to combine both theoretical and observational techniques if researchers wish to understand the complexity and diversity of planets in our Galaxy!

Current research includes:...

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AFFILIATION



University of California, Los Angeles

EDUCATION

- Hubble Postdoctoral Fellow, in Astrophysical Sciences, 2001 , Princeton University
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow, in Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics, 1999 , University of Toronto, Canada
- Ph.D., in Astronomy, 1996 , California Institute of Technology
- M.S., in Physics, 1991 , University of Natal, Surban, South Africa
- B.S., in Physics, 1990 , University of Natal, Durban, South Africa

AWARDS

- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellowship, 2004-2006
- NASA Astrobiology Institute UCLA Node, 2003-2008
- Hubble Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, 1999-2002

RESEARCH AREAS

Technology, Space, Space

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Brad Hansen as he combines both observational and theoretical techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of the planet formation problem. Your donations will support the necessary \$80K per year required to fund graduate students, computer infrastructure, travel, and publication costs. In choosing to support Dr. Hansen's research you will help provide answers to some of science's oldest questions!