



Prairie View A&M Professor Receives Top Physics Scholar Award

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Prairie View A&M University assistant professor of physics Orion Ciftja has been named a 2007-2009 Scholar with the internationally renowned Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics (KITP) at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

“This is not only recognition of my scholarly achievements and a personal source of pride, but also an honor for Prairie View. The fact that I will be around four Nobel Prize winners in physics is thrilling,” admits Ciftja.

Ciftja is one of only seven scientists from around the United States and the only scientist from an historically black college or university (HBCU) to be awarded the KITP Scholar award this year.

One of the top institutes of its kind in the world, the Kavli Institute brings together diverse groups of theoretical physicists and other scientists to do research in areas that encompass particle and nuclear physics, astrophysics and cosmology, condensed-matter physics, atomic and molecular physics, mathematical physics and emerging interdisciplinary fields.

Upon receiving the prestigious award, Ciftja was congratulated by David Gross KITP director and 2004 Nobel Prize Laureate in physics. Gross stated that the selection committee was very impressed with Ciftja’s application and looks forward to his association with KITP.

“The opportunity Dr. Cifta has as a scholar with the Kavil Institute for Theoretical Physics enables Prairie View A&M University to benefit from being part of a group of world-class scientists and researchers who are on the forefront of theoretical physics,” states Willie F. Trotty, PVAMU vice president for research and development.

As a KITP Scholar, Ciftja will visit the institute in several one to two week trips for three consecutive summers. Once at the institute, he will take part in workshops and conferences and conduct research in theoretical condensed matter physics with many of the nation’s leading scientists.

Commenting on his award, Ciftja adds, “I will do my best so that this exposure will directly benefit the physics program at PVAMU in terms of arranging beneficial research

collaborations and facilitating the path of our brightest studies into graduate studies.”

Dr. Ciftja joined the PVAMU department of physics in 2002 and currently supervises and maintains the university’s physics laboratories.



Orion Ciftja, named a 2007-2009 KITP Scholar. 2007

Photo: PVAMU University Relations

About Prairie View A&M University:

Ranked No. 27 on Black Enterprise magazine’s 2006 list of “Top 50 Colleges and Universities for African-Americans”, Prairie View A&M University was founded in 1876 and is the second-oldest public institution of higher education in Texas. With an established reputation for producing engineers, nurses and educators, PVAMU offers baccalaureate degrees in 50 academic majors, 37 master’s degrees and four doctoral degree programs through nine colleges and schools. A member of the Texas A&M University System, the university is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research and service. During the university’s 131-year

history, nearly 48,000 academic degrees have been awarded. For more information regarding PVAMU, visit www.pvamu.edu.