2001-2002 PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Randy L. Phelps, Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, is the recipient of the 2001-2002 President's Award for Research and Creative Activity. A member of the CSUS faculty since 1998, he received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Astronomy and Physics from Boston University. He received a B.S. in Astronomy from Case Westem Reserve University. Prior to joining the CSUS faculty, he taught at Oberlin College and Boston University. In addition to his teaching at CSUS, he serves as a representative to the Academic Council for the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and is the college's elected representative to the Academic Senate's Research and Creative Activity Subcommittee.

The President's Award was established in 1989 and is given each year to recognize extraordinary research and creative activity over the past five years by a member of the CSUS faculty. Nominees for the award must be their first ten years of service at CSUS. Dr. Phelps is the twelfth recipient of this award.

Professor Phelps is the author or co-author of twenty articles relating specifically to the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) Extragalactic Distance Scale Key Project as well as twenty additional articles on various astronomical topics. All have appeared in refereed journals. In addition he has contributed sections or chapters to thirteen other publications. A widely respected speaker, Dr. Phelps has made over thirty oral presentations, as well as over two dozen poster presentations, at various professional conferences and meetings.

In addition to an outstanding record of research and professional achievement, Dr. Phelps is a highly successful mentor of student research. Appropriate to our mission at CSUS, Dr. Phelps involves students in his research to a substantial degree. He often takes students with him on his observational trips. His lab is very active, and his papers generally have student co-authors.

ASTRONOMY FROM THE ANDES MOUNTAINS OF CHILE

Randy L. Phelps
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Until fairly recently, our understanding of the Universe has been based on observations primarily obtained from ground-based observatories located in the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth. A significant fraction of the sky, however, cannot be observed from the north, and the meteorological conditions, and encroaching light pollution at some of the most famous northern observatories (e.g., Palomar in Southern California) diminish their usefulness. The Andes Mountains of Northern Chile, located in the Atacama Desert (one of the driest locations on Earth), have among the best sites for astronomical observing, not only because of the clear skies, but also because the less-studied southern skyis unveiled in all its glory. With good reason, then, many of the great telescopes of the world are being built there, transforming Chile into one of the astronomical community's most desirable places to work. The international nature of science is nowhere more apparent than at the observatories of Chile.

This presentation discusses the excitement of observing in Chile, in the context of a project that utilizes star clusters, among the most beautiful objects in the sky, to investigate outstanding questions in astrophysics. Personal views regarding the role of research at CSUS, including the involvement of undergraduates, will also be highlighted.