

The Hunt for an Idea

Weekly Report 10/9/17 to 10/15/17

Last Friday, I went on an interview with Mr. Jeff Barton. This interview went much better than my first one as I was better prepared for it and had an idea of what to expect. Mr. Barton was especially helpful in the field of astronomy and cosmology as he teaches younger students about the field of astrophysics. However, I believe his biggest impact on me was his insight regarding how experimental astrophysics works.

Prior to the interview, I had a general idea of how experimental astrophysics works, but I did not have a clear view of it. I thought that the experimental aspect was just creating various tools and collecting data for the theoretical branch to use, but after discussing with Mr. Barton, I realized how complex this aspect of my field actually is. Although they do create different telescopes and other tools, they also formulate theories as to why certain phenomena exist. Essentially, the theoretical astrophysics side is more oriented towards answering questions like the imbalance in antimatter and matter while experimental astrophysics is geared towards explaining why uncommon phenomena exist, such as a peculiar galaxy or even extra terrestrial life.

Furthermore, I also focused on formulating an idea for my original work. The problem with my original work is that my field requires knowledge of advanced mathematics and science to formulate a traditional theory, so it would be difficult for me to create one as I do not have the necessary skills yet. However, I have started to read recent news articles, taking Professor Weathers' advice, to broaden my scope of what I could do. Right now, I am trying to come up with as many ideas as possible so that I can maybe combine them to form a truly unique project.

Overall, I learned more about experimental astrophysics as well as developed more potential ideas for my original work. Although this week was not the most eventful, it was still very helpful in progressing in my ISM journey. Next week, I will be setting up a few more interviews as well as do more research for my original work.

Until next week,

Sahil Jain