Dear Prospective Student,

I am excited that you are considering studying physics or astrophysics (or both!) at the University of Wyoming! Please allow me the opportunity to describe for you a bit about our program.

We have relatively small courses, allowing for excellent one-on-one interaction between students and faculty. After your freshman year, all of your physics classes would have between 5 and 30 students, with perhaps an average enrollment of 15. We offer a broad suite of courses, including standard Newtonian mechanics, quantum physics, solid state physics, and astrophysics. We offer multiple advanced laboratory classes that teach students how to accurately measure the speed of light, how to program computers to remotely control sophisticated electronic apparatus, and how to characterize crystal structures using X-ray scattering, among other topics.

There are numerous opportunities for undergraduate students to get involved in cutting-edge research. Physics majors can either work in a biophysics lab where scientists work on techniques for identifying pathogens, or they can work in condensed matter physics labs. Our condensed matter physicists specialize in meshing quantum physics with nanotechnology to develop efficient photovoltaics (solar cells), LED lighting, and state-of-the-art computer hard drives. Astrophysics majors work with astronomy faculty to carry out observations of galaxies, quasars, black holes, and star formation using our very own suite of research-class observatories including the 2.3 meter telescope on nearby Jelm Mt. We also use Wyoming’s new supercomputer to simulate the formation of planets outside our solar systems. Finally, many of our undergraduate students are trained to develop and give shows in our newly renovated digital planetarium. Many of us find that giving planetarium shows is a deeply satisfying way for conveying our love for science to the public.

In short, we have the interesting research and extracurricular opportunities one would hope to find at a research university, yet we are small enough to care about each student as an individual. I love that I have personally known each and every student who has graduated from our program.

If you are interested in our program and would like to learn more, please don’t hesitate to call (307-766-5154) or email me.

Good luck in your decision,

Danny Dale  
Professor and Department Head  
Physics & Astronomy  
University of Wyoming