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## **Physics & Astronomy Newsletter Message from the Chair**

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# Physics & Astronomy Newsletter Message from the Chair

March 1, 2017

Categories: News

Tags: David Ingram, physics and astronomy news, physics and astronomy newsletter 29, Robert Ackley

Greetings Physics and Astronomy Alumni and Friends,

Continual improvement is one of the goals of our department. Each year, new ideas come up for ways to improve the student experience, the research environment, curricular development, and so on. We also learn from our alumni about what we are doing right and ways to improve on current methods. Below are a few highlights from the 2015-16 academic year.



Dr. David Ingram

This year we welcome back our colleague, and editor of this newsletter, [Ken Hicks](#) who has been on assignment with the National Science Foundation as a program manager in nuclear physics. We also welcome a new faculty member in nuclear physics, [Zach Meisel](#). Zach is an Ohio native who got a Ph.D. in nuclear physics at Michigan State University and was a postdoctoral fellow at Notre Dame before coming to us. He is an experimentalist in low energy nuclear physics and will be using the Edwards Accelerator Laboratory for his research.

We received a very welcome surprise this year. **Robert Ackley**, B.S. 1941, generously left about \$5 million in his estate to be split 40 percent to Physics & Astronomy and 60 percent to Chemistry & Biochemistry. He joined Union Carbide when he graduated and moved to Oak Ridge National Laboratory in 1944 to join the Manhattan Project. He retired from Oak Ridge in 1977. We do not have a lot of information about him other than he fondly remembered late professor of chemistry Donald R. Clippinger, saying "he was the best professor." If there are alums reading this who can remember him I should appreciate hearing from you.

The Trustees have approved a new master plan for the University that contain plans for Clippinger Research Laboratories, named after Professor Clippinger, and known by just his name. The Trustees have approved funding for hiring an architectural company to plan for an addition to Clippinger and then its subsequent refurbishment. The proposal runs for many years. The plan is for some of us to move into the addition in the Summer of 2020. We then begin a two-phase refurbishment of the existing building. That will end in 2024/2025. It will be almost 10 years before the project is complete, if it goes according to plan. Next year will be spent on planning the entire project, so I should have more details by this time next year.

We greatly value the support we receive from our friends and alumni in helping our department in the pursuit of its mission. We always appreciate visits by our alumni, as a means to educate our students about possible career paths and to help our department remain connected to a larger community. This year **Satya Narayana**, Ph.D., traveled from India to the U.S. and stopped by to visit us. He worked for many years in medical physics and recently retired to India. We also express our sincere thanks to those who have contributed financially to our program, as listed elsewhere in our newsletter.

[View the complete 2015-16 newsletter as a pdf.](#)

[Dr. David Ingram](#)

Chair