

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to announce that Aparna Venkatesan, professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, will join the Tracy Seeley Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) as co-director beginning this semester. Aparna joins CTE Co-Director Marilyn DeLaure, professor in the Department of Communication Studies, and Program Assistant Nischa Jaster on the CTE team.

Aparna is a cosmologist working on studies of the first stars and quasars in the universe. Prior to joining USF in 2006, she was a National Science Foundation Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She received a PhD at the University of Chicago and a bachelor's degree at Cornell University.



Professor Aparna Venkatesan

Aparna has been recognized nationally for her research and diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership. She has received a number of USF honors including the Dean's Scholar Award, the Arthur Furst Award, which recognizes excellence in research for the betterment of humanity, a Jesuit Foundation award, and the College of Arts and Sciences Collective Achievement Award for Supporting Women in STEM Fields (co-recipient). Aparna is deeply committed to increasing the participation and retention of underrepresented groups in astronomy and the sciences, and is active in developing scientific partnerships with Indigenous communities around the world. Her recent work includes addressing the wide-ranging impacts of satellite megaconstellations through more inclusive space policy, and preserving space as a scientific, environmental, and cultural resource for humanity. Aparna is a steadfast advocate of teaching rooted in inclusion and cultural competence, and she looks forward to supporting faculty development in this new role.

I welcome Aparna warmly to the CTE leadership team and I look forward to the contributions she will make to pursuing the goals of our university's strategic plan as we seek to reimagine Jesuit education through the lens of equity and inclusion.

I would like to recognize and thank Eugene Kim, professor of legal writing, for his service to CTE over the past three years. As co-director, Eugene provided invaluable leadership through the transition to remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was also the driving force behind the CTE Podcast, both at the mic and in the editing booth. I am grateful for his many contributions.

I would also like to recognize and thank Pamela Balls Organista for her stewardship of CTE and for her continued emphasis on supporting our faculty, librarians, and staff in their endeavors to strengthen academic excellence and reflect USF's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Warmly,



Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Office of the Provost

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