# Raynor L. Duncombe Student Research Prizes




The Raynor L. Duncombe Student Research Prizes are awarded annually to a small number of students, on a competitive basis, to help defray the cost of attending the Division on Dynamical Astronomy Annual Meeting. The 2026 prize recipients are Yurou Liu (Yale University), Mark Dodici (University of Toronto), Grant Weldon (UCLA) and Sabina Sagynbayeva (Stony Brook University).

The prize winners are recognized with a certificate, a travel stipend, and recognition during their contributed presentation at the annual meeting. In addition to a travel stipend of $600, meeting registration and banquet fees are waived. They will present their research at the 2026 57th annual meeting of the DDA, at the University of Chicago. The past recipients can be found here (full list of past winners [1]).

You can donate to the Raynor L. Duncombe Student Research Prize fund through the AAS website [2]

## History of the prize and Raynor L. Duncombe

Formerly known as the Student Stipend Awards, these have been renamed in memory of Raynor L. Duncombe, one of the founding members of the division and its first chairman, in recognition of his many significant contributions to the field of dynamical astronomy, and his hearty support of the division he helped to create. Ray Duncombe was, throughout his career, extremely interested in and supportive of students in the field of dynamical astronomy.

## Nomination Guidelines

The Raynor L. Duncombe Student Research Prizes annually recognizes excellent student research to be presented at the annual meeting. The competition is open to all students currently enrolled in an

academic program (undergraduate or graduate) at any college or university and doing research in the area of dynamical astronomy. The DDA strongly encourages Duncombe prize applications from members of underrepresented groups in dynamical astronomy.

The **Raynor L. Duncombe Student Research Prize of the DDA** shall be granted on the basis of the following criteria:

- excellence and originality of scientific research to be presented at the annual meeting,
- interest in and engagement with the field of dynamical astronomy, and
- with the DDA's intention of increasing access, equitableness, and inclusiveness of the annual meeting.

For the purposes of this award, the field of Dynamical Astronomy contains but is not limited to the sub-fields of celestial mechanics, astrometry, geophysics, cosmology, and star and planet formation as well as Solar System, exoplanet, planetary system, stellar system, galactic, extra-galactic, relativistic, and astrophysical fluid dynamics. The Duncombe Student Research Prizes committee (listed here [3]) has final authority over the appropriateness of a nomination.

**Nomination procedure and requirements:**

Nominations for the 2026 prize was due at 11:59 pm EDT on **March 9, 2026** and should be submitted via the nomination form [4].

**Important note**: Applicants for a Duncombe Prize must also submit their meeting abstract via the abstract submission site.

A completed nomination package will include:

1. Abstract of the presentation to be contributed to the annual meeting of the DDA,
2. Letter of recommendation from an advisor, and
3. Cover letter written by the student, which should address the following questions: What is the scientific significance of the research you are presenting? What is the benefit to you for receiving a grant at this time?

Submit a Nomination for a Duncombe Prize [4]

Further inquires on the nomination procedure may be addressed to the Secretary of the DDA (DDA.secretary@aas.org [5]).

**Note on self-nominations:** Following the practice recently adopted by the AAS, we now accept self-nominations for all prizes. We intend that the prize selection committee will be "blind" regarding whether a candidate was nominated by someone else or was self-nominated. Accordingly, the letter of recommendation must say something like "I am writing to support the nomination of [candidate's name]" rather than "I am writing to nominate [candidate's name]." Any letter of recommendation that suggests that the author is directly "nominating" the candidate rather than "supporting the nomination of" the candidate will be returned for a rewrite.

**Selection Committee and process:** The award winner will be selected by a Duncombe Student Research Prize Selection Committee (listed here [3]) with at least 3 members appointed by the DDA leadership. The terms of members will be staggered so that one or two members are changed each year. Each year, the selection committee will remind themselves of potential biases, identify any potential perceived conflicts of interest, determine the selection process in advance of examining that year's nomination packages, and hold at least one teleconference with all members present. The selection committee will communicate with the DDA leadership to determine how many prizes may be given that year, then they will select that number of candidates for the award and submit to the DDA Committee the list of prize winners at least 30 days prior to the DDA meeting at which the prize winners will present. The DDA Committee reserves the right to approve or decline

the choice of the selection committee. In the latter case, the Duncombe Student Research Prize Selection Committee may decide to put forward alternative candidates or choose to decrease the number of prizes.

**Source URL:** https://dda.aas.org/awards/duncombe

**Links**
[1] https://dda.aas.org/awards/duncombe/past-winners
[2] https://my.aas.org/AAS_Member/Fundraising/Donation_Detail.aspx?itemid=D_DDASSP
[3] https://dda.aas.org/about/leadership
[4] https://dda.aas.org/awards/duncombe/nomination-form
[5] mailto:DDA.secretary@aas.org