

**Did You Know?**



The bell currently hanging in the bell tower originally served as a timepiece for the campus. The bell hung in the tower of Old Main, the first building on campus, and was rung to awaken students and to remind them of class times. The 700 pound masterpiece was also rung on special occasions such as outstanding athletic victories and could be heard within a mile of the campus. Mrs. Lucile Sandefer, the wife of long time University president J.D. Sandefer, secured the building of the tower we now have to preserve the history and significance of the bell.

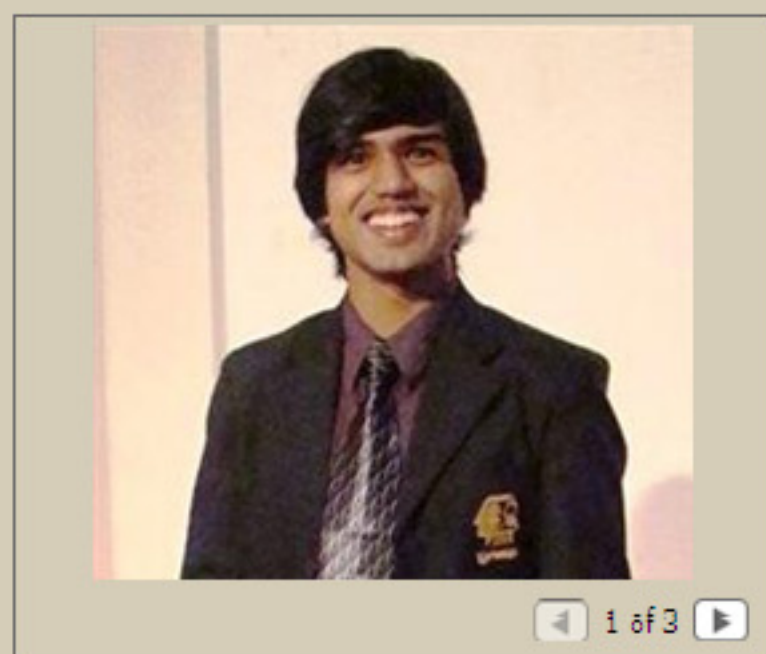


**EXPLORE HSU**



**Student in India to be Honored for Asteroid Discovery in Program Based at HSU**

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Photos: Atul Payapilly: Zhang, China; Vice Chancellor Dr. Paul Appasamy, Karunya University

Atul Felix Payapilly, a student at Karunya University near Coimbatore, India, surprised his vice chancellor with the news that he and a friend from a university in China had jointly discovered an asteroid.

Payapilly recently handed his letter of congratulations from

Hardin-Simmons University to Karunya University Vice Chancellor Dr. Paul Appasamy. As Appasamy's curiosity was piqued by the unusual congratulatory letter, almost simultaneously the letter initiated a chain reaction for a celebration to honor Atul on campus at Karunya.

Founder of the International Asteroid Search Collaboration and HSU professor, Dr. Patrick Miller, explained to Appasamy in an email that Atul and his friend Zhang from China discovered the Main Belt asteroid during the most recently completed 45-day campaign conducted by the International Astronomical Search Collaboration centered at Hardin-Simmons University.

HSU Associate Professor of Mathematics Miller started the educational outreach program, based at the Holland School of Mathematics and Sciences on the HSU campus, in October 2006. Dr. Miller and undergraduate honors student Jeff Davis founded the program, starting with five schools from around the United States.

The program, provided at no cost to the participating schools, gives high school and college students the opportunity to help in an international search for near-Earth objects and discoveries of previously unknown asteroids in the Main Belt between Mars and Jupiter.

The program has grown and now serves 250 schools with more than 3,000 students participating each year in search campaigns which represent more than 30 countries on five continents. The goal, says Miller, is to one day serve 1,000 schools from around the world.

Over the Internet, the schools receive astronomical images taken only hours before at the Astronomical Research Institute (Westfield, IL), Institute for Astronomy (Pan-STARRS, University of Hawaii), and Xinglong Station (Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing). Students then use a software package to assist in the discovery and measurement of the positions of asteroids and all other near-Earth objects.

Students have discovered more than 300 previously unknown asteroids, eight of which have received an official number and have been recorded by IASC with the Minor Planet Center at Harvard University and the International Astronomical Union (Paris).

The recent discovery by Payapilly and Zhang will be on provisional status for several years as Main Belt asteroid 2010 RR52, as it is currently called, is fully tracked.

Miller says, "Over the coming three to six years, the progress of the asteroid is followed until its orbit is completely known. It is then the asteroid will be assigned a number and placed in the world's official catalogue maintained by the Minor Planet Center and the International Astronomical Union in Paris, France."

Miller continues, "After it reaches numbered status, Atul and his friend will have a 10-year period of time to propose a name for the asteroid. All names are approved by an international committee of the IAU."

Meanwhile, back in India, plans are being made to honor Atul this coming Sunday.

Vice Chancellor Appasamy explained, "We represented Atul to our Academic Council, which is the highest academic body at our university, for its commendation. Our Chancellor, Dr. Paul Dhinakaran, has agreed that Atul should be recognized at a Thanksgiving Service on February 20th when most of our faculty, staff and students will be present."

One funny note about Atul...

Payapilly demonstrated his acute sense of humor when Miller asked his permission for Hardin-Simmons University to do a news release about his discovery and his recognition at Karunya University. "Wow, that's totally unexpected," he replied. Then with comic timing worthy of a snare drum rim-shot he added, "Didn't expect to discover an asteroid either!"

He will have a chance to discover another asteroid as he participates in the 65 school asteroid search campaign with students from schools all over India this coming summer.

