

Dr. Shelley A. Wright

Short Narrative Biography

Shelley Wright is an Assistant Professor at the University of California, San Diego in the Department of Physics and the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences. Wright has extensive experience working with optical and infrared instrumentation, with a particular focus on imaging cameras and spectrographs that operate behind Adaptive Optics systems on large telescopes. Her observational research focuses on galaxy and supermassive black hole formation and evolution across cosmic time. Wright currently serves as Project Scientist for the first light instrument (IRIS) for the future Thirty Meter Telescope.

Throughout her career, Wright has been an active collaborator in optical and near-infrared SETI instrument development and research. Wright has been involved with design, construction, and implementation of pulsed laser SETI instruments. Wright was a critical team member that developed one of the most advanced optical SETI experiments, and is now Principal Investigator of the first near-infrared SETI instrument and survey.

Wright received her B.S. in Physics at University of California, Santa Cruz in 2001. She served as support astronomer at the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes on La Palma, then continued her graduate studies at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the Physics & Astronomy Department. Wright conducted her graduate research on Keck Observatory instrumentation and observations while working in the Infrared Astrophysical Laboratory at UCLA, receiving her Ph.D. in 2008. Wright then served as a postdoctoral researcher at University of California, Irvine in 2008-2009 working on instrumentation development and scientific studies for the Thirty Meter Telescope. In 2009, she received a NASA Hubble Postdoctoral Fellowship and the University of California President's Fellowship at University of California, Berkeley for her observational research program on distant galaxies. Prior to her arrival at UC San Diego, Wright was Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto in the Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics and the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics from 2012-2014. Wright was recently named a 2016 Hellman Fellow at UC San Diego.