

**New Investigator Award (NIA) for assistant professors Kentaro Nagamine and Janelle Bailey**

"Implementing Learner-Centered Strategies in Introductory Astronomy Courses: A Case Study of a New Professor," is a joint effort between assistant professor Janelle Bailey (PI, College of Education, Curriculum & Instruction) and assistant professor Kentaro Nagamine (Co-PI, College of Sciences, Physics and Astronomy). The goal of the project is to study how a new professor (in this case, Kentaro Nagamine) will learn about and implement learner-centered teaching strategies in his introductory astronomy course. Traditionally, astronomy is taught by lecture in large, auditorium-style classrooms, where students passively listen to someone talking about the wonders of our universe. After attending a NASA-sponsored workshop in May 2007, Nagamine will revise his course to involve students in small-group and large-group activities that help students become more active learners, discussing complex ideas with their peers in order to reinforce their understanding of astronomy. Bailey will serve as a mentor to Nagamine, as he decides what types of activities to use in his course. She will also study his decision-making process and identify barriers or problems that might exist in implementing the new strategies. These results will help improve future offerings of the NASA-sponsored workshops and similar meetings for astronomy faculty nationwide. The NASA workshop is directed by faculty from the University of Arizona, where such learner-centered strategies have helped thousands of students improve their understanding of astronomy in recent years.