

I spent two years in the School of Engineering at Stanford University in the scientific computation and computational mathematics program before I enrolled in the astronomy and astrophysics Ph.D. program at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). During my time at Stanford, my class work was focused almost exclusively on the analytic and numerical solution of partial differential equations, numerical linear algebra, numerical optimization, and statistics. In fact, I only took three physics classes: a class in radiation transport, a class in back-of-the-envelope physics, and a class in planetary science. All and all, I accumulated 16 quarter units from Computational Mathematics and Engineering Department, 6 quarter units from the Mathematics Department, 21 quarter units from the Statistics Department, 6 quarter units from the Physics Department, and 3 quarter units from the Geological and Environmental Sciences Department. The other 14 quarter units my transcript indicates I completed in 'Physics 490' were awarded for independent study with Tom Abel at the Kavli Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology (KIPAC); the work I performed there was mostly programming. None of the classes I completed at Stanford transferred to UCSC, so I am truly starting anew. I believe that the transition from a graduate program of study run by Stanford's School of Engineering featuring only three thematically heterogeneous graduate physics classes spread over two years to a Ph.D. program in astronomy and astrophysics constitutes a significant change of field.