

## Martin Rocek Recognized by SUNY Chancellor's Award

Written by Administrator

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The [Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity](#) is a SUNY-wide award intended to recognize consistently outstanding scholarly and creative productivity of its faculty.

Martin joined the C.N. Yang Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Stony Brook in 1983. He had received his doctorate in 1979 from Harvard, and before coming to Stony Brook had postdoctoral appointments at Cambridge University, where he was research assistant for Stephen Hawking, and then at Caltech. Martin came of age professionally when *supergravity*, invented here at Stony Brook, combined the then-new theoretical concept of supersymmetry to Einstein's gravity, creating a quantum theory that for the first time could unify gravity with elementary particle physics as we know it. In this period of great intellectual ferment, he quickly became, and has remained in the intervening decades, one of the world leaders in creating and applying new ideas of mathematics to quantum field theory and string theory, in discovering new theories with important implications to mathematics, and in training talented students for careers in both fields. Martin stands as one of Stony Brook's outstanding links to the highest ambitions of contemporary theoretical physics, in which Einstein's dream of a unified theory of nature based in geometry is reconciled with the dynamic world-view of quantum physics.

A dedicated teacher, Martin excels at all levels, from training postdocs to mentoring talented high school students. Since arriving at Stony Brook, he has served as a doctoral thesis advisor to over thirty students, a number of whom are faculty members at research universities. He is an inspiring mentor, able to work closely with students when it is in their best interests, and just as importantly, able to understand when students are best left to their own devices. To the great admiration of his colleagues, Martin also has the ability to identify substantive and meaningful projects in mathematical physics for participants in research competitions, and they have consistently gone on to success at the national level, including three finalists and three semifinalists in Intel programs. A number of these projects have led to publications in scholarly journals. This special ability to combine research at the highest level with the creation of a supportive environment for developing careers helped him play an absolutely key role in the development of the series of annual *Simons Summer Workshops in Mathematics and Physics*, which bring together renowned physicists and mathematicians alongside promising students, postdocs and junior faculty from around the world.

Martin shares the 2016 honor with Tom Weinacht of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. He is the fourth YITP faculty member to have received the [Chancellor's Award](#), joining John Smith, Alfred Goldhaber and Robert Shrock.