

## **2018-2019: Corey McAllister**

UNC-Asheville sophomore Corey McAllister from Kannapolis, N.C., has been named the recipient of the Astronomy Club of Asheville-Carolyn Keefe Scholarship for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Corey, a physics major, began conducting undergraduate research in astronomy his very first year at UNC-Asheville, working with Research Scientist David Wake. “We work on galaxy evolution – that’s his field of expertise,” said McAllister. “My current project involves rotation of galaxies in clusters – galaxy kinematics. They affect each other gravitationally and studying how galaxies interact with each other gives you clues about that relationship and how they work together in that system.

“We use data from the Sloan Digital Sky Survey telescopes at the Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico – it’s part of a project to map the observable universe. It does involve computer programming and I came in with no programming experience at all but it’s actually been pretty simple. Dr. Wake just gave me some resources and I set about learning what I needed to do this.”

As part of one of his astronomy classes, Corey also is involved in research that uses Lookout Observatory on UNC-Asheville’s campus, where he also works as a docent. “It’s pretty great,” he says, “my favorite part of the job is when there are people who’ve never looked through a telescope before. I can show them planets and galaxies and explain what’s going on, and some people are really amazed because they’ve never seen anything like it, so it’s a really wonderful feeling. To be able to teach and do research would be the best job I could imagine, so while there are many possible paths ahead, becoming a professor is what I’m shooting for.”