

Michael Castelaz, Ph.D., is an Emeritus Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Brevard College. His research interests include eclipsing binary stars, stellar evolution, the interstellar medium, and the preservation and digitization of historic astronomical photographic plate collections.

He began his career after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming in Astrophysics, then becoming a postdoc at NASA Ames Research Center, followed by another research position at the Allegheny Observatory at the University of

Pittsburgh, which included teaching astronomy courses there and Carnegie Mellon University.

As teaching and research began to blend together, Dr. Castelaz turned to a full-time faculty position at East Tennessee State University where he could bring his research into the classroom, beginning years of experiential education.

Ten years later, in 2001, an unexpected opportunity popped up which he accepted – to become the first Science Director at the newly established Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute. At PARI, he built research and education programs for K-12 students, and undergraduate research, furthering experiential education for many students in a non-academic setting. In 2014 Brevard College opened a new Physics faculty position and Dr. Castelaz was brought in and successfully built a Physics program at the college where Physics majors are engaged in research.

