



What's New, Speeches and Lectures

- What's New
- Speeches
- Lectures

Contact Us | Sitemap | 繁體 | 简体

About HKUST

- Welcome from the President
- Mission and Vision
- Strategic Plan
- Governance
- Senior Administrators
- Facts and History
- Rankings and Awards
- Global Partnership and Presence
- University Publications
- Video Channel and Photo Gallery
- What's New, Speeches and Lectures**
- Up-coming events
- About the Campus

Teaching and Learning

Research and Graduate Studies

Studying at HKUST

Administration

Library

Giving to HKUST

Press Release

30/09/2011 World-renowned Astronomer Speaks on Gamma-ray Bursts at HKUST Shaw Prize Lecture

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) presented today (30 September) The Shaw Prize Lecture in Astronomy 2011 featuring the distinguished astronomer and recipient of this year's Shaw Prize in Astronomy, Dr Enrico Costa.

Dr Costa spoke on "Gamma-ray Bursts: The Largest and Most Distant Explosions in the Universe". Since the phenomenon of gamma-ray bursts is among the greatest discoveries in astronomy of the past century, he discussed some of the properties of gamma-ray bursts, how these properties have provided the statistical evidence for a remote location, and how the bursts can be used as tools for examining some of the conditions at the earliest times after the Big Bang. The enlightening talk, which shed light on understandings about the origin of the universe, received enthusiastic response from the audience.

Dr Costa is the Director of Research at the Institute of Space Astrophysics and Cosmic Physics (Rome) of the National Institute of Astrophysics, Italy. He is jointly awarded with Dr Gerald J Fishman, the Senior Astrophysicist, NASA - Marshall Space Flight Center in USA, the Shaw Prize in Astronomy this year. The award is recognized for their leadership of space missions that enabled the demonstration of the cosmological origin of gamma ray bursts, the brightest sources known in the universe.

The Shaw Prize, an international award to honor individuals who have achieved excellence in their respective fields, was established under the auspices of Sir Run Run Shaw in November 2002. It is managed and administered by The Shaw Prize Foundation based in Hong Kong. Shaw Prize in Astronomy, one of the three annual Shaw Prize awards, carries a monetary award of one million US dollars. The other two awards are the Prize in Life Science and Medicine as well as the Prize in Mathematical Sciences.



HKUST President Tony F Chan presenting a souvenir to Dr Costa



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[▲ Top](#)

Quick link

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