

Ivan Altunin NVSGC Graduate Fellowship

Ivan Altunin, originally from Lake Tahoe NV, is a Graduate Student at the University of Nevada Reno studying Physics. Pursuing a graduate degree was something that Ivan always knew was in store for him as both of his parents made contributions to space exploration as professional astronomers. He is very excited to be working as part of Dr. Richard Plotkin's research group at UNR to continue to grow his skills as a research astronomer. Ivan has a wide breadth of experience in the field of astronomy covering the full electromagnetic spectrum. He first was bit by the astronomy-research bug in high school developing phase-dispersion minimization python code to confirm the period of an eclipsing binary star. He continued his research doing astrometric observations of double stars utilizing speckle interferometry and has also dabbled in exoplanet research, operating radio telescopes for SETI, and detecting microlensing events. He was an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley where he was a member of Dr. Alex Filipenko's research group as an observer on the 1m Nickel Telescope and as a ZTF image checker looking for and identifying supernovae. There he worked on studying the localized dust content within galaxies using stellar population synthesis analysis methods which he continues to use in his current research. His current research studies the complex ecosystems of galaxies and how Ultra Luminous X-ray Sources interact with their host galaxies in hopes of understanding how galaxies evolve. Outside of astronomy, Ivan enjoys flying as a flight instructor and hiking the mountains of Lake Tahoe.