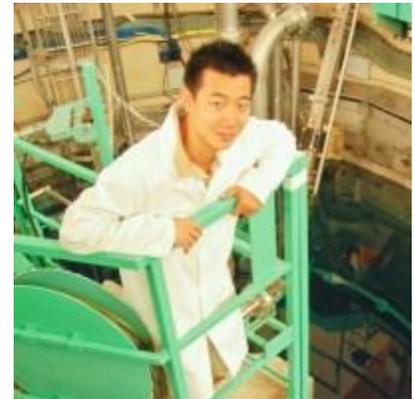


Kent Leung

Job title: Nuclear physicist

Job description

My field of work is experimental nuclear physics – in particular I'm interested in experimentally testing the fundamental symmetries of physical laws and the particle physics involve in the early moments of the universe.



How and when did you know you were interested in a STEM career?

During my senior year of college, I really enjoyed the practical/experimental side of physics during labs. I grew up working at my dad's factory, driving fork lifts and operating machines, and I was also tinkering with electronics and computers in my spare time. It turns out that I could make a career out of designing and building experiments that no one had done before while answering deep and important questions in science. I remember being in a lab putting together a system that detected light and radiation invisible to the human senses. Or during grad school accelerating, trapping and manipulating individual sub-atomic particles that make up all matter in the universe. Or building piece-by-piece refrigerators that could cool things down to a fraction of a degree of absolute zero.

Who helped influence your choice to have an interest or a career in STEM?

My professors during undergrad and graduate years were the most influential. I found their passion for the subject to be infectious: I remember meeting many who were well above the age of 70 and were still teaching and doing research everyday; they could have of course retired long ago, but it wasn't really "work" for them because they enjoyed it so much. I also remember hearing stories of them traveling around the world, living it so many exciting places and that had been a desire of mine.

Do you have any STEM heroes?

Robert A. Millikan and Chien-Shiung Wu (or "Madame Wu"). Both were great experimental physics that really sparked my interest in focusing on this path. The latter discovered one of the most fundamental properties about the violation of symmetry in the laws of the universe. She was also the first Chinese-American to be elected into the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the first female president of the American Physical Society.