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Astronomy in a Virtual Department: The SARA Consortium

TERRY OSWALT, Florida Institute of Technology

For almost 15 years, the Southeastern Association for Research in Astronomy (SARA) has operated a remotely-accessible 1-m telescope at the Kitt Peak National Observatory near Tucson, Arizona (see <http://www.saraobservatory.org>) that has served as a focus for faculty and student research. From its beginnings with four members, the SARA consortium has grown to include ten universities spanning Indiana to Florida and has recently assumed operations of a similar telescope at Cerro Tololo Interamerican Observatory in Chile. This talk will review some of SARA's most notable past and present activities as well as our future aspirations. We will also make a case for establishing new consortium-based initiatives in other areas of physics.