

Abstract Submitted
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Student perspectives of a graduate bridging course in astronomy and astrophysics in South Africa VICTORIA NWOSU, University of Cape Town, DEDRA DEMAREE, SISSI LI, Oregon State University, SAALIH ALLIE, University of Cape Town — Astronomy and Astrophysics have been designated the flagship areas of research in South Africa. To this end, a national postgraduate structure, the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme was established at the University of Cape Town. Despite overall success the programme has failed to recruit and retain Black South African students. In order to address this postgraduate bridging program, the Extended Honours Programme, was established to address the issue. An important part of the EHP includes a research component investigating the reasons for the lack of successful participation. In general, a numbers of issues have been identified including for example s specific difficulties with intermediate level physics, general learning problems and affective issues. We present preliminary results from recent interviews carried out with each cohort of students that entered the EHP over the past four years. Prior to each group interview each student completed a personal meaning map and an identity survey. Preliminary results of these data and the interviews will be discussed.

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