Ralph G. Yount Distinguished Professorship in Sciences

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Peter Engels

Professor
Department of Physics and Astronomy

An expert in experimental atomic physics, Peter Engels studies the fundamental laws of nature. By cooling clouds of atoms to temperatures near absolute zero–among the coldest in the universe–he creates a novel state of matter in which atoms behave like waves and follow the peculiar laws of quantum mechanics. Knowledge from these experiments leads to new design paradigms for revolutionary quantum technologies with potential applications in areas as diverse as sensing, computation, secure communication, imaging, and simulation.

In an era of rapid change affecting high-tech industry, a quantum-smart workforce is among society's most pressing needs. Through his practical experience with quantum experiments, Engels plays a key role in preparing students for success in the field of quantum technology.

He provides a unique educational experience on many levels–by his classroom teaching, by incorporating quantum technologies in undergraduate laboratory instruction, and by guiding students toward leading-edge research.

Engels founded the Fundamental Quantum Physics Laboratory at WSU, establishing the University as a leader in modern physics. He is a member of the NASA Cold Atom Lab collaboration, working with scientists and engineers from the Jet Propulsion Lab and other national institutions to remotely control an ultracold atom experiment installed onboard the International Space Station.

A fellow of the American Physical Society, he has received two college career achievement awards.

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