



Department of
Engineering Physics
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Presents:

2017 Distinguished Achievement Award Recipient



Adam Steltzner

Mars 2020 Chief Engineer
NASA/Caltech Jet Propulsion Laboratory

**How a rocker became a lead engineer for the Mars rover: How
Curiosity changed my life and I changed hers**

Abstract: It really IS rocket science: Engineering Mechanics grad Adam Steltzner (PhD '99) led the team that invented, developed, tested and operated the landing system that put the *Curiosity* rover on Mars. Learn how this alum made the transition from San Francisco-area rock-and-roll band member to world-renowned NASA engineer.

Biography: Adam Steltzner has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from U.C. Davis ('90), an MS in Applied Mechanics from Caltech ('91) and a PhD from UW-Madison in Engineering Mechanics ('99). He is an Engineering Fellow at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which he joined in 1991, and has worked on projects including Cassini, Galileo, Mars Exploration Rovers and Mars Science Laboratory. He is a member of the AIAA and the IEEE and has been elected into the IAA and the NAE. He previously led the team that developed the Mars Curiosity Rover's sky crane landing system, which he wrote about in his book, [The Right Kind of Crazy: A True Story of Teamwork, Leadership and High-Stakes Innovation](#). He is currently the Chief Engineer of the Mars 2020 project.

**Friday, 10/20/2017
2:00 PM, 1106 ME**