

17-year-old works on NASA spaceship

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A 17-year-old student who helped test a U.S. space agency spacecraft has been asked to address the American Geophysical Union's fall meeting next week.

Hassany Alejandro of Menlo Park, Calif., spent last summer working with Stanford University graduate students testing the insulation capacity of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration spaceship that will serve as the first space-based gravitational wave observatory.

Alejandro is scheduled to present his findings Dec. 13 during the AGU fall meeting in San Francisco -- a meeting to be attended by more than 14,000 of the nation's top scientists.

"It's a little intimidating when I stop to think about it," Alejandro said. "Some of the greatest minds in the world will be attending the conference and I'm presenting my poster as a high school student. It's very exciting."

Alejandro is enrolled at Canada College in Redwood City, Calif., where he's finishing his high school courses and simultaneously taking college courses in calculus and biology.

His AGU presentation will focus on LISA -- the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna -- that will be launched by NASA in 2015. LISA will use an advanced system of laser interferometry for detecting and measuring gravitational waves.

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