

Tyson brings the universe down to Earth

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Tulane University Campus Programming (TUCP) went out with a big bang on Monday (April 14), presenting astrophysicist [Neil deGrasse Tyson](#) for the last [Direction program](#) of the academic year.



Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, on a mission to bring science to the general public, rocks the audience in McAlister Auditorium, with hundreds more crammed into the overflow room in Kendall Cram Lecture Hall to watch live streaming of his lecture. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Tyson is host and editor of “COSMOS: A Space-Time Odyssey,” airing on FOX (a counter-intuitive choice, Tyson acknowledged) and the National Geographic Channel. The show is a sequel to “Cosmos: A Personal Voyage,” the 1980 PBS series hosted by Carl Sagan, previously the world's best-known astrophysicist. Tyson also hosted PBS's [“NOVA ScienceNOW”](#) and launched the popular [“StarTalk”](#) radio program.

With those programs and many more appearances on TV, the director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York drew thousands to his talk, “This Just In.”

Working the stage like a consummate stand-up comedian, Tyson bopped from cosmic subject to cosmic subject: the controversy over demoting Pluto from

planetary status (“Pluto is still not a planet. Get over it.”), the proposal to make the Bible the official state book of Louisiana, the “blood moon” this week, the continuing expansion of the universe due to the Big Bang (“It’s still happening. Get over it.”), the Higgs Boson “God” particle, life on Mars, his “discovery” of the planet Krypton in the Constellation Corvus, asteroids — his topics were seemingly as vast as the cosmos.

Tyson’s main point, it seemed, was to think rationally, based on scientific evidence.

Tyson concluded his talk with a reading from “the Book of Carl,” Sagan’s *Pale Blue Dot*. Projected on the screen behind Tyson was an “interplanetary selfie” shot of Earth by [NASA’s Cassini spacecraft](#) as it orbited Saturn in 2013.

“— Every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam,” Tyson intoned in his resonant bass voice as he read Sagan’s words. “— It underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”