



On Saturday, February 14, 2009, Boston University Photonics Center Director Dr. Thomas Bifano was awarded the Bepi Colombo Prize. The Bepi Colombo Prize was founded to honor the memory of Giuseppe “Bepi” Colombo, a fundamental figure in celestial mechanics, space science and technology development. The Bepi Prize is awarded biannually to researchers for outstanding achievements in research and technology transfer.

Five finalists were selected from an international pool of applicants and asked to prepare a ten page description of their research and technology transfer activities, and to present a summary of their work in a public forum at the Aula Magna 'Galileo Galilei' at the Palazzo del Bo in the heart of Padova.

The jury was composed of leaders from the European space science and astronomy community, chaired by Roger-Maurice Bonnet, Executive Director of the International Space Science Institute. They evaluated the finalists’ achievements in research, education and technology transfer. This year’s criteria included:

- \* Innovative character
- \* Potential for new discoveries
- \* Impact on knowledge and education
- \* Quality of presentation
- \* Match with Bepi Colombo’s achievements
- \* Potential in the medical and defense domain



The jury awarded the 2009 prize to Dr. Thomas Bifano for his work in “micro-deformable mirrors for astronomical telescopes.”



Thomas Bifano is the Director of the Boston University Photonic Center. Dr. Bifano is a professor of Mechanical Engineering at Boston University. His research focuses on the development and use of microelectro mechanical systems (MEMS) in optical applications. He is also a member of the Boston University Center for Space Physics and the Fraunhofer Center for Manufacturing Innovation. Dr. Bifano cofounded Boston Micromachines Corporation, a business leader in the production of deformable mirrors for applications in astronomy, defense and bio-imaging.