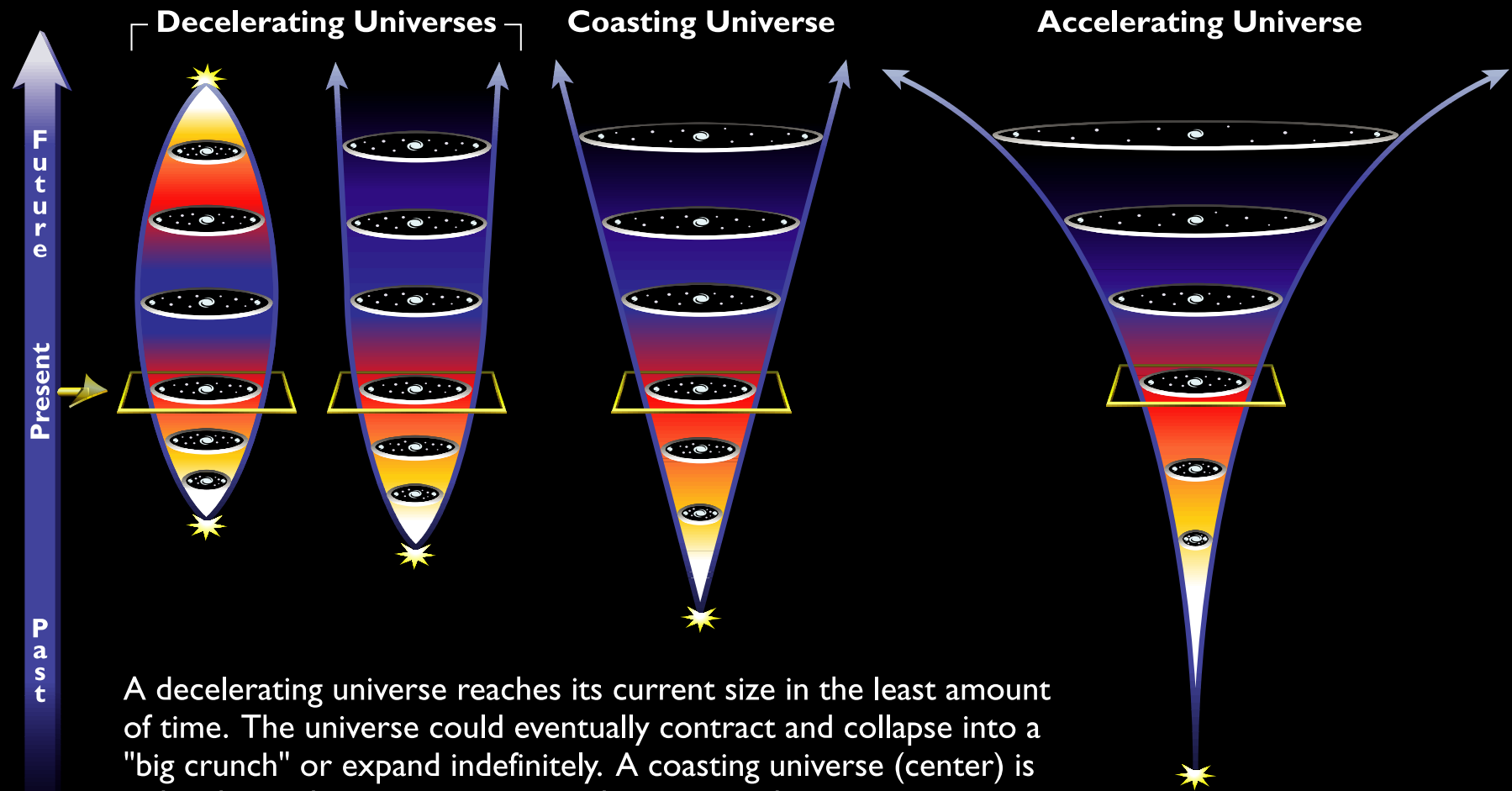


Possible Models of the Expanding Universe



A decelerating universe reaches its current size in the least amount of time. The universe could eventually contract and collapse into a "big crunch" or expand indefinitely. A coasting universe (center) is older than a decelerating universe because it takes more time to reach its present size, and expands forever. An accelerating universe (right) is older still. The rate of expansion actually increases because of a repulsive force that pushes galaxies apart.