Out to Innovate Elects New Board Members

In June, Out to Innovate’s board elected four new members. Our congratulations and thanks to Luca Caputo, Penn Hutchinson, Bish Paul, and Dane Samilo for their willingness to serve. In the statements below, our new board members introduce themselves.

Luca Caputo (he/him)

In my early years in science, both as undergraduate or graduate student, I had no figures of out LGBTQ scientists to look up to. Thanks to the opportunity to join Out to Innovate’s Board of Directors I will put my passion to improve the representation and academic opportunities for URM (with a special focus for LGTBQ individuals) and all I have learnt in my previous DEI initiatives at the service of Out to Innovate, with a special focus on mentoring the new generation of LGBTQ scientists and let them feel the sense of belonging and the power of being proudly their full self without fear or shame.

Penn Hutchinson (they/them)

Hello OTI! My name is Penn Hutchinson (they/them/theirs), and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for Out to Innovate. I am an assistant professor of chemistry at a small liberal arts college, and my research interests lie in analytical and environmental chemistry. I am passionate about inclusive and equitable education as well as advocacy for LGBTQ+ folks in STEM. I look forward to helping to execute OTI’s mission and vision!

Biswajit “Bish” Paul (he/him)

Bish Paul is a scientist, advocate and community leader whose work straddles legislative experience, scientific research, education & outreach, diversity and inclusion, and LGBTQ advocacy. As the Policy Director for a statewide education nonprofit, Bish is leading policy change that results in closing gaps in access to, and attainment of, high-value credentials and family-sustaining careers in every region of Washington. In 2021 his work was highlighted in the “Local Icons” section of the ‘Rise Up: Stonewall and the LGBTQ Rights Movement’ Exhibition at the MoPOP in Seattle!

Bish trained as a Molecular Biologist at the University of Washington Medical Center and Fred Hutch. His doctoral dissertation work used gene editing to engineer human T-cells to make them resistant (continued on p.2)

Out to Innovate Scholarship Winners

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2021 Out to Innovate Scholarships, made possible by an Innovation Generation grant from the Motorola Solutions Foundation.

The winner of the 2021 Out to Innovate $8000 Undergraduate Scholarship is Kaylin Moss. Kaylin is studying Computer Science at Marist College. Kaylin is a leader within the Marist College community; she spearheaded the creation and establishment of a National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) chapter, and serves as a liaison between the Fox Pride and Black Student Union organizations. Kaylin hopes to merge her passion for art and computer science and pursue a career in software development. “I am so excited to be the recipient of the $8,000 Out to Innovate scholarship! It is a great relief knowing that I will not have to worry about how to fund my education. This scholarship will enable me to continue to be a trailblazer in technology and a leader in my community.”

The winner of the 2021 Out to Innovate $8000 Graduate Scholarship is Amelia Leon. Amelia is working on a Masters of Epidemiology at Florida International University. Amelia researches experiences of intimate partner violence in transgender and cisgender women at the Southern HIV & Alcohol Research Consortium (SHARC) Lab. They also are the lead organizer for Reflect Collective, an organization with a mission to raise awareness of sexual assault within the LGBTQ community and provide support for survivors. “I am so honored to have received 1st place for the Out to Innovate Scholarship. This means the world to me. Thank you on behalf of me and on behalf of all LGBTQIA+ survivors. We're one step closer to justice through STEM initiatives.”

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to HIV entry, and subsequent infection. As a Science Policy fellow in the California State legislature, Bish took his in-depth PhD training and translated it into real-world policy outcomes.

Bish is committed to the cause of advocating for increased community understanding of science and technology, and government investment in the innovation economy. Being an out, immigrant, scientist of color, Bish is passionate about equity efforts and increasing diversity in STEM, especially at leadership positions.

Bish immigrated to the Unites States in 2003. Since then he has pursued a career in biomedical research, successfully defended his dissertation, dabbled in documentary filmmaking with screenings at the Seattle LGBT film festival and Seattle Asian American Film Festival, established the Capitol LGBTQ Association nonprofit in California, discovered a career in evidence-based policymaking, and worked on passing 50+ laws. He also got married to his partner Theo, unsuccessfully tried to recreate authentic Hyderabadi biryani recipes, and adopted an adorable pitbull-boxer named Bae!

Dane Samilo (any)
Hello, OTI community! My name is Dane Samilo (he/him/any), and I am overjoyed to continue in my capacity as secretary to the board, but now as a full-fledged board member. My background is in immunology and infectious disease, but my current trajectory lies in science policy, specifically in the areas of STEM pipelines and diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the workplace and education. I am also highly interested in (but not currently working on) LGBTQ+ demographic data collection policies and health misinformation in the LGBTQ+ community. And, coming as a surprise to perhaps no one, I am a huge geek when it comes to gaming and TV/movies! Looking forward to getting to know you all and working alongside you to carry out OTI’s mission and vision!

BHE Foundation CARES Scholarship Winners
Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2021 BHE Foundation CARES $5000 Scholarships: Aziz Dridi, Alexander Stewart, Jada Cannon, Margaret D’Auria, and Alexandra Loyot.

Aziz Dridi is a PhD student in Engineering Education at Purdue University, where he creates tools to address the longstanding issue of women being underrepresented in engineering by leveraging the affordances of virtual reality and cross-cultural storytelling. His research and academic accolades are matched by his diplomacy and advocacy as an LGBTQ+ activist in Tunisia and the U.S.

“Out To Innovate is a privilege that shall be wielded to send ripples of hope to our people there.”

Alexander Stewart is an undergraduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has a double major in Physics and Mathematics. Active in the LGBTQ+ community, Alex is the Director of Hacker Experience for the first queer-focused hackathon on the UNC campus. Alex also has created and presented LGBTQ+ inclusive trainings for the UNC Physics department. “Thank you all for your support! This scholarship will carry me through to finish my senior year of my undergraduate career, and will allow me to save up to be financially stable as I enter graduate school. I will use this support to better my abilities as a physicist, and show that out LGBTQ+ people can thrive in academia!”

Jada Cannon is an incoming Architecture graduate student at Cornell University. Her interest in architecture was initially sparked as a way to combine art and geometry but has evolved along with her interests into a way to uphold values and needs in the built form. “I have always strived to focus my efforts on designing projects that prioritize inclusion and safety for underrepresented groups throughout my time studying architecture. As an LGBTQ+ student and a woman of color, I know firsthand how spaces can feel exclusionary, especially in technical fields. My background has bolstered my commitment to a career that enhances diversity in the field of architecture and building technology. I plan to continually reinforce the efforts to make sure the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups feel seen in architectural design. Receiving this scholarship not only reduces the financial burden of my graduate-level education but enables me to focus more fully on researching further avenues to bring equity into the built environment. I feel honored to join the NOGLSTP family as a scholarship recipient!”

Margaret D’Auria is an incoming graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley in the Energy, Civil Infrastructure, and Climate program within the Civil Engineering Department. Inspired to make life better for all, Margaret hopes to design sustainable urban infrastructure. “I am so grateful for this scholarship! Being an LGBTQ+ STEM student is something I am very proud of, and it is an honor to be recognized. This scholarship will help me as I begin my master’s degree studies at the University of California, Berkeley in their Energy, Civil Infrastructure, and Climate program. I hope to be a voice for those most impacted by climate change and an advocate for sustainable infrastructure.”

Alexandra Loyot is a Multidisciplinary Engineering major at Purdue University. Drawn to engineering for its applications in solving problems, she hopes to address interdisciplinary problems such as climate change and food sustainability. At 17 years old, Alex was the youngest college-level intern to work at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center. “I am so grateful to be a recipient of this scholarship to help further my education in engineering at Purdue University. I couldn’t have gotten to where I am today without help from my incredible mentors. My goal is to be a role model for other young queer women in STEM and to show young queer people that there will always be a place in STEM environments for them. I look forward to continuing to be a voice for my community and to proudly represent my queer identity throughout my career in engineering.”

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The winner of the 2021 Out to Innovate $3000 Undergraduate Scholarship is Emily Sanchez. Emily is studying Human Developmental and Regenerative Biology with a minor in Global Health and Health Policy at Harvard University with the goal to become a physician scientist specializing in pediatric immunology.

The winner of the 2021 Out to Innovate $3000 Graduate Scholarship is Zach Huit. Zach is a Clinical Psychology PhD student at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. A champion of advocacy and community building, Zach brings this perspective to his research and clinical work with a mission to support sexual and gender minority youth and families to promote resilience and well-being. “I am proud to represent queer and AAPI communities in the field of Clinical Psychology. As a Doctoral Student, this scholarship opportunity will allow me the opportunity to attend a national conference and support my research understanding the well-being and family relationships for transgender and gender diverse youth. Thank you Out to Innovate for your diligent work to support queer students across STEM fields and supporting scientific progress for LGBTQIA communities.”

Cindy Phan is recipient of a 2021 Out to Innovate Community College Transfer Scholarship for $1500. Cindy is studying Engineering Technology at Chandler Gilbert Community College with a passion for innovating technological solutions and will continue her education in mechanical engineering at Arizona State University. “Describing the emotions felt after receiving the acceptance email is difficult but just know this was just the thing I needed this week. I appreciate all NOGLSTP members’ time and efforts that have been put into an event such as this one! I am very excited to head into this new semester especially now with the financial support and trust from your team. This Out to Innovate scholarship brings light, motivation, and an open path towards success in my college career. The STEM and LGBTQ+ communities are a proud name for me to participate in and dedicate my life to, despite the hardships that come with them. I personally have dedicated much time towards becoming a person I would have needed when I was younger and someone I will need when I am older. Someone strangers, friends and family, or student peers can reach out to for a helping hand, a listening ear, or encouraging words. Your financial support and emotional support will only fuel that fire. I want to thank each and every one of you for believing in not only me, but also our communities. Thank you so much for rewarding me with this scholarship opportunity!”

Shawn Bryant is recipient of a 2021 Out to Innovate Community College Transfer Scholarship for $1500. Shawn has earned an Associate of Science Degree from Thomas Nelson Community College and is starting this Fall as a Biology major at the College of William & Mary. Shawn is a demonstrated leader and organizer with a bright future in biology. “I am so excited to be a recipient of the NOGLSTP Out to Innovate Community College Transfer Scholarship. As a non-traditional student, I’m grateful for NOGLSTP’s dedication to empowering LGBTQ+ scientists at every step of their educational journey, and I hope to bring this same dedication with me throughout my career by continuing to organize for queer mental health care and awareness. This scholarship will be extraordinarily helpful to me as I transition to a full-time student at the College of William & Mary this fall, where I will be undertaking my first independent research project studying soil virology. My goal is to someday work with viruses to engineer new varieties of targeted antibiotics.”

Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA) Aerospace Career Enhancement (ACE) Scholarship

The winner of the 2021 SPEAA ACE $5000 Scholarship is Elliott Khilfeh. Elliott is completing a bachelor’s degree in Physics at Western Washington University, where he has spent this summer working in an astronomy lab. These are some initial step towards accomplishing his goal to work as an astrophysicist for NASA. “Being an openly queer and transgender Palestinian-American student has come with a lot of struggles. I am so grateful for Out to Innovate and the SPEEA ACE Scholarship, which recognizes my experiences and encourages me to become a proud queer astrophysicist. Growing up, I never saw scientists like me, and I want to change that. My time as an undergraduate has made it apparent that the physics community still has a long way to go with diversity. This scholarship gives me the opportunity to use my visibility and voice to foster a more inclusive environment in physics, and encourage other LGBTQ+ STEM students to keep chasing their dreams.”

Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience

LaVinia Ray is the winner of the 2021 Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience $2000 Scholarship. LaVinia is a histotechnology professional at Southern Research, where she contributes to a wide range of research topics spanning from HIV to COVID-19. In order to further her career and become a subject matter expert, she is completing a bachelor’s degree at the University of West Alabama. “I am so honored to receive the 2021 Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience. As a woman scientist and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I have encountered many barriers to my growth and development, however one thing has held strong... my commitment to making the path an easier one for those who follow in my footsteps. We, as a community, must be a support systems for one another and I will honor the support this scholarship has given me by being a supportive of others.”
Avangrid Scholarship Winners

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2021 Avangrid $5000 Scholarships: Kara Lindstrom, Claire Love, Art Hamilton, Zahara Spilka, Jeremy Fertig, and Jon Siemon.

Kara Lindstrom
Kara is completing her undergraduate degree at Duke University, where she is double majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science. She has a strong interest in robotics and has used her knowledge to print 3D assistive devices as well as design underwater robots as part of Duke’s RoboSubmarine Team. “I am grateful for the Avangrid Scholarship Committee for their commitment to supporting members of the LGBTQ+ community such as myself, and as I continue my educational journey I will strive to similarly provide support to my peers in an effort to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment within STEM fields.”

Claire Love
Claire is a Chemical Engineering PhD student at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her graduate research focuses on the use of nanophotonic materials for effective luminescent solar concentrators, which combines her passions for renewable energy, programming, and machine learning. “I’m really excited to see the work NOGLSTP is doing to support queer people in STEM, and I am so proud to accept this award.”

Art Hamilton
Art is majoring in Industrial Design at Western Washington University. Finding his calling earlier than most, Art was drawn to industrial design when he started learning 3D printing and CAD modeling in elementary school. “It is an honor and privilege to be recognized by NOGLSTP and Avangrid with this scholarship. I have dedicated my life to improving my community, which is something this award further empowers me to do through funding my engineering education. As someone in STEM, I recognize that the diversity of perspective can be paramount to creating solutions for problems. Therefore, the ability of an LGBTQ+ person to get an education has the possibility to change the world, which is exactly what I plan to do.”

Zahara Spilka
Zahara is an incoming Computer Science PhD student at the University of Minnesota. She is passionate about community service and has interests in design, computer science, art, and the human experience. Zahara hopes to combine these interests into a career in animation that creates accurate and realistic depictions of people ranging in different races and ethnicities, body types, religions, genders, and sexualities. “This is an amazing opportunity, and I am very happy to be one of the NOGLSTP’s scholarship recipients.”

Jeremy Fertig
Jeremy is a junior at Duke University pursuing his undergraduate degree with a major in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Energy Engineering. As a member of Duke's FOCUS program, Jeremy immersed himself studying past, present, and future global energy issues. This experience fueled Jeremy's passion to accelerate innovative engineering solutions that help society. Currently, Jeremy has been working to develop an alkaline water electrolyzer and hydrogen storage system capable of providing lower cost, clean fuel for cooking and heating versus electricity from a higher cost, conventional electrochemical battery. “I am grateful for the Avangrid Scholarship which will help me pursue my engineering work designed to help others. Thank you NOGLSTP for your recognition and support.”

Jon Siemon
Jon has completed an Associate in Science Program at Cape Fear Community College as a dual enrollment high school student. This fall, he is starting at the University of Texas at Austin as a Mechanical Engineering major. “I am humbled and thrilled to be recognized by NOGLSTP and excited to become a member of this community. I thank you for this honor. Knowing that organizations such as NOGLSTP support Proud engineering students like myself propels me to pursue my education and make my dreams of roller coaster design come true as I start my academic career at the University of Texas at Austin, Cockrell School of Engineering.”

Inphi Scholarship

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winner for the 2021 Inphi Scholarship in Physics and Engineering.

The Inphi Graduate Physics/Engineering Scholarship for $5000 is awarded to Suhas Eswarappa Prameela. Suhas is a Mechanical and Materials Engineering PhD student at Johns Hopkins University where he works to design lightweight magnesium alloys for lightweight vehicles to improve fuel efficiency. He is very active in diversity and inclusion efforts at Johns Hopkins and has also founded a visibility project to promote LGBTQ+ academics through the Queer Faculty Project. “I am thrilled to receive the 2021 Inphi Scholarship and very happy to be recognized for my academic work, diversity and inclusion efforts. Thanks to Inphi and Out to Innovate- NOGLSTP for continuing to promote and bring visibility to LGBTQ+ students in STEM. I am humbled to receive this award along with many other talented and hard-working individuals.”

We thank all of our generous sponsors for their support of these scholarships. To learn more about our scholarship programs, see our website: https://www.noglstp.org/programs-projects/scholarships/
IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Check your mailing label. Your renewal date is in the upper right section of your address block. Your membership number is just to the left of your expiration date. You may renew online at https://www.noglstp.org/memberservices, or fill out the form below (and on the other side of this page), and return it with your check to NOGLSTP, PO Box 91803, Pasadena CA 91109. You may also use this form to inform us of any address or area code changes. LAGLS members: please renew through your regional group to enjoy discounts on dues.

American Medical Association Foundation National LGBTQ+ Fellowship

The American Medical Association Foundation announced in July that the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s School of Public Health and Medicine will be the first institution to participate in its new National LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program, which aims to combat shortcomings in the medical care provided to LGBTQ people in the United States. The fellowship will be launched with a $750,000 grant from the AMA Foundation and aims to provide training for early-career physicians on how to best meet the needs of LGBTQ patients and combat disparities in the health equity landscape. The UW-M’s School of Public Health and Medicine will fund its first fellow in July of 2022. The AMA also announced plans to launch similar programs at other medical schools, with the goal of eventually training hundreds of fellows and developing new standards of care across medical disciplines.

Spectra Conference to be Held in August

Spectra is proud to announce that the first Spectra Conference will be hosted virtually by the Institute for Computation and Experimental Research in Mathematics (ICERM) on August 18-20, 2021 (1 p.m. to 5 p.m. EST). The goal of this conference is to create a meeting for LGBTQ+ mathematicians where all branches of the mathematics community (applied, theoretical, and education) are represented and to create a space for LGBTQ+ mathematicians both to celebrate achievements and to spark conversations of challenges in our community. The conference will feature three plenary speakers, as well as contributed sessions of short research talks and lightning talks. Additionally, they plan to have social hours via Gather.Town and a panel to discuss the past, present and future of the LGBTQ+ math community.

To attend the virtual conference, please register through ICERM (use the "Apply with Cube" icon):
https://icerm.brown.edu/topical_workshops/tw-21-smc/
Registration is FREE!

If you would like to know more about the program of the conference as it becomes available, please go to the conference page:
https://sites.google.com/view/spectra-math-conference/conference-schedule

Department of Education Federal Notice on Title IX Interpretation

On June 16, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) issued a federal notice that Title IX, which protects students and employees from sex-based discrimination in education, also includes protections for transgender students. The DOE stated that its decision is based on the U.S. Supreme Court’s interpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on sex. Last year, the court made a momentous ruling that this statute includes discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. The department’s announcement reflects the commitment of President Joe Biden’s administration to LGBTQ+ inclusion, which has included issuing an executive order asking federal agencies, including the DOE, to review policies that may be discriminatory against LGBTQ people. Since then, conservative lawmakers in at least 31 states have introduced legislation banning transgender student-athletes from participating in sports teams that correspond to their gender. The DOE has not made it clear how it plans to enforce its new stance on transgender inclusion in those states.
Out to Innovate Awards Ceremony

On July 31, the Programs Committee organized and hosted the Out To Innovate Awards Ceremony. The committee chose to host a virtual event this year since there would not be an in-person opportunity to celebrate the winners. Out To Innovate members and the winners of the 2021 Recognition Awards, 2020 Ben Barres Fellowships, and 2021 Out To Innovate scholarships met and mingled in a “Gather.Town” space. We had the pleasure of catching up with Dr. Tonia Poteat, an Out To Innovate Scholar from 2011, who is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Medicine at UNC Chapel Hill. Videos and other information on the awardees are now available at the Out To Innovate website.

Census Bureau Survey to Include SO/GI Questions

The U.S. Census Bureau announced that the Household Pulse Survey will now include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. The new version of the questionnaire, which entered the field on July 21, marks the first time a Census Bureau-sponsored survey includes questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. This is an important step in expanding federal sexual orientation and gender identity data and will help provide new insights on how LGBTQ+ families are faring through the COVID-19 pandemic. You can find the Household Pulse Survey here: https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/household-pulse-survey-updates-sex-question-now-asks-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity.html

ABOUT Out to Innovate

Out to Innovate (formerly NOGLSTP) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization and professional society of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, asexual, queer people, and allies employed or interested in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) fields. Out to Innovate empowers LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM by providing education, advocacy, professional development, networking, and peer support. Out to Innovate educates all communities regarding scientific, technological, and medical concerns of LGBTQ+ people. Surface mail may be addressed to: Out to Innovate, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena, CA, 91109-9813. For more information, see our website at www.noglstp.org.

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Out to Innovate Bulletin

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