

# Out to Innovate *Bulletin*

Fall 2022

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## 2022 Out to Innovate Scholarship Winners

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners of the 2022 Out to Innovate™ Scholarships, made possible by a grant from the Motorola Solutions Foundation.

The winner of the 2022 Out to Innovate \$6000 Undergraduate Scholarship is **Emma Strassberg**. Emma is studying Environmental Science and Forestry Wildlife Science at the State University of New York. Motivated by the many environmental challenges facing our world, Emma found a scientific home in conservation field research. She has studied a range of different animals, including mammals, hellbenders, and bats. Emma plans to continue her education as a wildlife biologist through graduate studies. “This scholarship is an amazing opportunity that helps ensure I’m able to conduct research, expand my education, and start working towards a graduate degree. I’m honored to have been chosen for this award and will continue working hard in the environmental field to help conserve our beautiful planet and make sure the LGBTQ+ community will always have a place here.”



The winner of the 2022 Out to Innovate \$3000 Undergraduate Scholarship is **Kevin Tu**. Kevin is double majoring in Physiology and Neurobiology and Economics at the University of Maryland, College Park. Kevin combines his passion and talent for science with a sense of urgency to help others. In response to the rural opioid challenges he witnessed growing up, he founded the non-profit Combating Overdoses in Rural Areas (CORA). Through CORA, Kevin has led educational campaigns, published research, and testified before the Maryland state legislature about



opioid harm reduction in rural communities. Kevin has become a skilled bench scientist and has research experiences in a range of biology fields from neuropathology to genetics to cancer therapeutics. He intends to combine these passions as a physician-scientist. “I am so honored and excited to be a recipient of this scholarship, which will provide funding for me to attend an international conference to present my research on cancer biology and continue pursuing my passion for personalized medicine. Though it can sometimes feel isolating to be [a scientist and part of the LGBTQ+ community], I feel so comforted and grateful to organizations like Out to Innovate for their unwavering support of LGBTQIA+ students in STEM.”

The winner of the 2022 Out to Innovate \$6000 Graduate Scholarship is **Luis Tun**. Luis is working toward a master’s degree in Communications



Data Science at the University of Southern California. Luis is a fierce advocate for health and education equity, for the LGBTQ+, low-income, immigrant, and Spanish-speaking communities. As a high school student, he worked as a medical assistant and student manager of a free healthcare clinic, often

also serving as a translator for patients. Luis returned to the clinic as a college student, where he worked on their data systems and applied informatics to better demonstrate the clinic’s essential work to funders. He has also led outreach campaigns to encourage other immigrant students and parents that college is within reach and, as *(continued on p.2)*

### Inside this Issue:

- Page 1: 2022 Out to Innovate Scholarship Winners
- Page 2: BHE Foundation CARES Scholarships Recipients
- Page 4: Amy A. Ross Scholarship Winner
- Page 5: Volunteering Opportunity with OTI Membership Committee; Membership Form; Rochelle Diamond Keynote Speaker at Pasadena’s National Coming Out Day Celebration
- Page 6: Kitsap Pride Event Coverage Includes Mention of Out to Innovate; Member Services

## Out to Innovate Scholarship Winners

*continued from p.1*

part of a bilingual advocacy group named SALUD (Student Advocates Leading Uplifting Decisions), successfully lobbied the Board of Education to reduce the Advanced Placement test fee, which acted as a financial barrier for many low-income students. Luis leads by example as a proudly out gay man. He intends to work in the technology sector and use algorithms for social good. "I'm excited to have been selected for the Out to Innovate Scholarship recipient. Being a first-generation and low-income [member of the LGBTQ+ community] and Latinx student, I have faced various educational and financial obstacles to pursue a post-secondary education. Receiving the support from organizations such as Out to Innovate will allow me to continue my education and become an advocate for underrepresented communities."

The winner of the 2022 Out to Innovate \$3000 Graduate Scholarship is **Samantha Usman**. Samantha is an Astronomy and Astrophysics PhD student at the University of Chicago. Samantha is fulfilling her lifelong dream to study the stars. As an undergraduate at Syracuse University and a masters student at Cardiff University, she tested and developed computational analyses to validate the detection of gravitational waves by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). This significant contribution will enable discoveries for years to come. She now studies stars enriched with elements from previous stellar generations. Samantha serves as a role model and mentor for other women and LGBTQ+ scientists. As part of this work, she noted the isolation for graduate students during COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 and created a social messaging server for LGBTQ+ graduate students at the University of Chicago, which enabled a thriving supportive community that continues two years later. "I'm excited to accept the Out to Innovate scholarship! I look forward using this grant to attend conferences and connect with other LGBT+ scientists in the coming year."



## BHE Foundation CARES Scholarships Recipients

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2022 Berkshire Hathaway Energy (BHE) Foundation CARES \$5,000 Scholarships: Sadie Atkinson, Claire Bentfield, Alice Dang, Brenardo Garcia Marti, Phong Ha, Lauren O'Sullivan, Juniper Savchick, Tyrell Simmons, Rachel Tenney, and Tylin Williams.

**Sadie Atkinson** is an undergraduate student at Utah State University studying Computer Science. With first-



hand experience interning as a software developer with the Air Force Civilian Service, Sadie intends to pursue a career as a software engineer after graduation. "I am so grateful and excited to receive this scholarship. Since I started college, I always had the goal to graduate debt-free. This scholarship will help me achieve my goal as I finish my undergraduate this year. I am very

proud to be a part of the LGBTQ+ community and STEM fields. I have received so much support from my family, friends, and professors throughout my college experience. I hope to continue representing and advocating for the LGBTQ+ community in college and throughout my career."

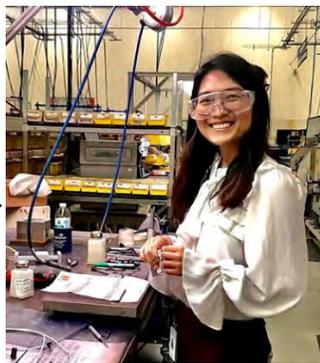
**Claire Bentfield** is studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of St. Thomas.

Claire is fulfilling a lifelong dream to become an industrial designer. In addition to her studies, Claire is a student-athlete and coaches softball in the summers. "I am very honored to have received this scholarship. I've always been passionate about STEM topics, which has fueled my pursuit of a career in Mechanical Engineering, and I have also been an out member of the LGBTQ+ community as of 2016. It means a lot to me that people like me are getting recognition for the ideas and innovations we have and will contribute to the field. Thank you so much for the work that you're doing and the support that you have chosen to give me personally."



**Alice Deng** is a senior at Anderson University, pursuing a bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. Influenced by her lived experience on humanitarian aid trips and as a first-generation immigrant, Alice is applying her passion

for mechanical design to design resilient systems for communities at risk of natural disasters. “Thank you to the Out to Innovate Scholarship Committee for selecting me as the recipient of the BHE Foundation Scholarship. This scholarship will provide me the resources necessary to completely focus on my study and the natural disaster prevention effort in Vietnam. Once again, thank you to the Out to Innovate Scholarship Committee for this amazing honor and opportunity for students like me.”



**Brenardo Garcia Marti** is pursuing a bachelor’s in Computer and Electrical Engineering at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. Driven by the urgency of global climate change and his experiences as a Mexican American, Brenardo hopes to employ his engineering education to work on resiliency in public infrastructure and to teach and advocate for others underrepresented in STEM. “My body is a container for the joy and gratitude I feel with hardly any room



for any other feeling! Receiving this truly came at the right time and place in my life: receiving this BHE Foundation Scholarship will be part of the linchpin that propels me into my passion of bringing my community members into STEM's present and future! Often the intersectionalities of my identity leave me feeling like all my achievements are in spite of oppositions; but this makes the support I receive shine so much brighter. And that warmth will sustain me for quite some time, thanks to the kindness of the donors and committee. Thank you very much for this wonderful award.”

**Phong Ha** is a graduate student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley. Balancing his many identities including gay man and self-professed math nerd, Phong hopes to employ his data science skills for social good, including to support the LGBTQ+ community. “I am honored and grateful to receive the Out to Innovate Scholarship. It is a testament that I am on the right track to more queer representation in the STEM community. With this scholarship, I will be more financially stable as I attend UC



Berkeley this fall and able to focus more on my training to become a better student, engineer, and researcher who can make positive impacts in my field and community.”

**Lauren O’Sullivan** is an undergraduate at Colorado School of Mines studying Environmental Engineering. Lauren is a fierce advocate for trans and nonbinary representation and inclusion in historically male-dominant institutions and fields. Inspired by the climate justice movement, they hope to continue working on environmental issues. “I often feel that my identity is underrepresented in Engineering, a field that is already difficult enough without the added struggles that come with being queer. I am so happy to see Out to Innovate advocating for and supporting students like myself in this endeavor and am so grateful to be awarded this scholarship.”



**Juniper Savchick** is a PhD student in Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering at Virginia Commonwealth University. In her graduate work, Juniper uses computational



models to explore the properties of materials in extreme environments. With a passion for teaching, Juniper aims to become a much-needed trans and queer role model professor for future engineering students. “This scholarship provides me with the financial support necessary to follow my passions and generate novel ideas

within the field of engineering. As a trans woman, it can be prohibitively expensive to afford graduate school, and Out to Innovate has provided me with the tools necessary to overcome that financial barrier. I am eternally grateful for this organization and am excited to see it grow!”

**Tyrell Simmons** is finishing a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and Physics at Virginia Commonwealth University. As an intern, Tyrell worked to update risk models for nuclear operations at Dominion Energy. After graduation, he hopes to continue research on nuclear energy to help create safe and sustainable



energy technology. He is also a dedicated advocate for diversity within his field and university clubs and is driven to continue this essential work throughout his career. “I am truly blessed to receive this scholarship and strive to be and do the best that I can as a recipient of this award.”

**Rachel Tenney** is a graduate student in Civil Engineering at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Rachel is dedicated to making STEM more LGBTQ+ friendly. She volunteers with Queer Science to inspire a younger generation with science demonstrations. After finishing her graduate studies on nitrogen removal from wastewater treatment ponds, Rachel hopes to pursue a career as a professor at a small, liberal arts college. “I am so honored to receive the BHE Foundation Scholarship. As an award recipient, I will be able to focus on and disseminate my research, complete my degree without incurring auxiliary costs, and participate in professional development opportunities that I would not otherwise have access to. Thank you, BHE Foundation and Out to Innovate!”



**Tylin Williams** is a Chemical and Life Sciences Engineering major at Virginia Commonwealth University. Inspired by the fantasy books of their childhood, Tylin is studying bioengineering to combine their creativity, imagination, and passion to change the world. They plan to continue working in genetic engineering and will explore novel ways to apply bioengineering to address global challenges. “I’m extremely grateful to the Out to Innovate society for providing me with this incredible award. This scholarship doesn’t just allow me to continue my education, as I can also serve as a guide and mentor for other LGBTQ+ youth going into STEM and hopefully work toward creating a more welcoming and inspiring environment on campus. Scientific advancement, to me, has always meant the opportunity for people to become more free and comfortable in their lives.”



As I continue my academic career, I hope to use my scientific knowledge to that end.”

### Quote from the BHE Foundation

“The BHE Foundation is proud to sponsor Out to Innovate scholarships for STEM students who identify as part of the LGBTQ community. Berkshire Hathaway Energy is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace that enriches the lives of our employees and enhances the communities where we live and work. Supporting the advancement of people of diverse backgrounds is critical to our industry, as well as Berkshire Hathaway Energy’s vision to be the best energy company in serving our customers, while delivering sustainable energy solutions.”

--Darla Zink, Chief Diversity Officer, Berkshire Hathaway Energy

## Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience Awarded

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the recipient of the 2022 Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Biosciences.

**Adonis Rubio** is the winner of the 2022 Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience \$2000 Scholarship. Adonis is a PhD student in Immunology at Stanford University. Adonis is an active advocate for his community and serves on multiple university and department committees, is the vice-president of Stanford SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science), and serves as a board member of Stanford Pride. Adonis studies antibody interactions with viral proteins in order to inform the design of vaccines for persistent viral diseases including HIV, SARS-CoV-2, and influenza. Adonis intends to build on his research and leadership experiences and to pursue a career in academia. “I am super grateful for receiving this scholarship; this will help me focus on my studies and continue to work toward research vaccines for emerging pathogens. As this scholarship has a great impact on me, I hope to work with Out to Innovate to continue to empower and elevate queer scientists.”



## Volunteering Opportunity with OTI's Membership Committee

The membership committee is looking for volunteers willing to help to set up the new IN-HOUSE mentoring program for Spring 2023:

The mentoring working group will meet regularly (likely every two weeks) from November to January to:

- Decide and prepare six topics of interest
- Identify the preferential platform to use for the mentoring program
- Organize a workshop event at the beginning of the program
- Organize a networking event at the end of the program

Depending on the number of volunteers we anticipate a time commitment of approximately 1-3 hours per week.

We are especially interested in recruiting 1-2 people with experience designing and managing courses in a Learning Management System such as Blackboard or Moodle.

Graduate students are encouraged to apply to be part of the working group – there will be space for up to 3 students on a first come, first served basis.

Working group members are welcome, but not required, to participate as mentors.

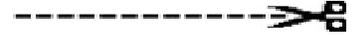
The working group is forming now and will have a kickoff meeting before Thanksgiving weekend. If you are interested in joining this working group or wish to have more information, please send an email to [mentoring@noglstp.org](mailto:mentoring@noglstp.org)

## Rochelle Diamond Keynote Speaker at Pasadena's National Coming Out Day Celebration

Rochelle Diamond, chair emeritus of Out to Innovate, was keynote speaker at Pasadena's National Coming Out Day Celebration on October 11. Diamond is director of the Flow Cytometry/Cell Sorting Facility at Caltech, and is acknowledged as a national expert on the use of flow cytometry and cell sorting. In recognition of her long volunteer service, she received the Walt Westman Award from NOGLSTP in 2004, and has been honored by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center with their Lesbians and Bisexual Women Active in Community Empowerment (LACE) Award.

## 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://oti.memberclicks.net/membership>, 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.



### Membership Form

To renew your Out to Innovate membership or become a member of Out to Innovate, complete this form and make a check or money order payable to NOGLSTP. Send the check and form to: Out to Innovate, PO Box 91803, Pasadena CA 91109.

Annual membership dues enclosed:

- \$40 for working professionals
- \$20 for post-docs
- \$10 for students and unemployed
- \$1000 for Lifetime Membership

Circle payment type:

Renewal      New      Info change only

Date:

Name:

Address (don't forget your zip code!):

Circle newsletter preference:    print    email

Your pronouns:

Telephone:

Email:

URL:

Latest Degree/Subject:

Job Title:

Employer (or school if student):

Alum of (latest degree):

Do you want your name and contact information in the Out to Innovate membership roster (to be released to other Out to Innovate members)?

Yes

No

Don't forget to fill out the other side →



## Member Services

The Out to Innovate member services site allows for self-serve member update and automated renewal notices. Point your web browser to [www.noglstp.org/memberservices](http://www.noglstp.org/memberservices) and log in to explore or update your profile, or to renew your annual dues. Of course, you're welcome to renew or join the old-fashioned way with pen, paper, and check. You can use the clip-out form in this newsletter, or fill out a downloadable form from our website. We're happy to have your support any way you want to give it!



Membership Form (continued)

Special Techno-interests or expertise:

Please list any other professional societies that you belong to:

Are you a member of any of these groups?

- American Astronomical Society
- American Chemical Society
- American Geophysical Union
- American Institute of Chemical Engineers
- American Nuclear Society
- L'GASP Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists
- LAGLS: Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Scientists
- Mathematics Association of America or American Mathematical Society
- National Postdoctoral Association
- NOGLSTP at Oklahoma State University
- NOGLSTP at Purdue
- NOGLSTP at U Nebraska - Lincoln
- PrideSTEM at Texas Tech
- Queer Science (U Minnesota)
- Queer in STEM at CSUN
- QSTEM of Lake Nona High School

For new members: How did you learn of Out to Innovate?

What would you like to help us with?

- Serve on Board of Directors
- Serve as Chair or Secretary
- Help at AAAS events
- Organize or host local event
- Write newsletter articles
- Edit the newsletter
- Speak about/on behalf of Out to Innovate at an event
- Serve on recognition awards committee
- Assist with the Mentoring Program
- Assist with Out to Innovate career summit
- Write a grant proposal
- Evaluate scholarship applications
- Help with fundraising
- Start/represent an LGBTQ+ caucus at my professional society: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know, but would like to help with something

## Kitsap Pride Event Coverage Includes Mention of Out to Innovate

The coverage in the *Kitsap Sun* of a Pride event held in July in Kitsap, Washington included mention of Out to Innovate. Marcie Mathis represented Out to Innovate at the event.



<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2022/07/24/kitsap-pride-2022-brings-thousands-kitsap-county-fairgrounds/1013748500/>

### 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](http://www.noglstp.org).

### Board of Directors (append each address with noglstp.org)

TJ Ronningen, Chair, Columbus OH, [tj-board@](mailto:tj-board@noglstp.org)  
Christine Bland, Member at Large, Denver CO, [cb-board@](mailto:cb-board@noglstp.org)  
Rebecca Callahan, Member at Large, Washington DC, [rc-board@](mailto:rc-board@noglstp.org)  
Luca Caputo, Member at Large, San Diego CA, [lc-board@](mailto:lc-board@noglstp.org)  
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Barbara Belmont, Treasurer, Pasadena CA, [bbelmont@](mailto:bbelmont@noglstp.org)

### Affiliates: (more info at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9kq2lps>):

500 Queer Scientists  
AAS SGMA: American Astronomical Society (AAS) Committee for Sexual Orientation and Gender Minorities in Astronomy  
AIChE (American Institute of Chemical Engineers).  
gAyGU (American Geophysical Union)  
L'GASP: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists  
LAGLS: Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Scientists  
LGBTQ Chemists and Allies (ACS PROF Gay and Transgender Chemists and Allies)  
NOGLSTP at Purdue  
NOGLSTP at University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
Diversity and Inclusion in American Nuclear Society Committee (formerly NuclearPride)  
LBGTQ STEM at Oklahoma State University  
Queer Science (University of Minnesota)  
Spectra: The Association for LGBT Mathematicians

Mentoring Program Coordinator: [mentoring@](mailto:mentoring@noglstp.org)  
Scholarship Program Coordinator: [scholarships@](mailto:scholarships@noglstp.org)  
Recognition Awards Program Coordinator: [awards@](mailto:awards@noglstp.org)  
Newsletter Editor: Daniele Cherniak, [editor@](mailto:editor@noglstp.org)

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