

Summer NEWSLETTER



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IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2:

- 2025 LGBTQ+ Educator of the Year: Dr. André Isaacs
- 2025 LGBTQ+ Scientist of the Year: Dr. Jeff Willy

Page 3:

- 2025 Walt Westman Award: Kei Koizumi
- BioScience article on perceptions of LGBTQ+ faculty

Page 4:

- Out to Innovate Board attends AAAS SOGI data symposium and ASME Pride events
- 2025 Career Development Fellowship Awardee

SPOTLIGHT

We're highlighting our three Recognition Awardees: LGBTQ+ Scientist of the Year, Dr. Jeff Willy; LGBTQ+ Educator of the Year, Dr. André Isaacs; and Walt Westman Service Award winner, Kei Koizumi, as well as our 2025 Out to Innovate Fellow

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



OCT 13-16 - Out & Equal Workplace Summit, Seattle, WA



OCT 16-18 - oSTEM Conference, Baltimore, MD



JAN 2026 - DiscoverE Future City High School Competition



MAR 6-8, 2026 - OTI Summit, Los Angeles, CA

2025 OUT TO INNOVATE RECOGNITION AWARDS



Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners of its 2025 recognition awards for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) professionals in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Out to Innovate has recognized exemplary individuals with LGBTQ+ Educator, Engineer, and Scientist of the Year for over 20 years. And this year, we are also announcing a Walt Westman Award in recognition of an Out to Innovate member who has made significant and outstanding achievements that advance our organization's mission.

(continued on pg. 2)

2025 LGBTQ+ EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR: DR. ANDRÉ ISAACS



André Isaacs

Out to Innovate is awarding Dr. André Isaacs its LGBTQ+ Educator of the Year in recognition of his impact on his students, his joyful sharing of chemistry with the public, and his thoughtful education of chemistry professionals on being more effective science communicators.

During the period of pandemic lockdown, Dr. André Isaacs connected a public need—bridging the divide between science educators and the broader public—with the emergence of TikTok and with his cultural identity as a Jamaican. Isaacs started using his social media to share information about science and chemistry in a fun, personal, and creative way. His TikTok posts started to include dance, an integral part of his Jamaican identity, a way he had built community and commonality in his childhood.

Isaacs is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at College of the Holy Cross. Isaacs grew up in Kingston, Jamaica and came to the U.S. for college (at College of the Holy Cross). He came out as a gay man in graduate school. He struggled then to

find his community as a gay man, but has found amazing mentors and supporters, and he now feels connected to a thriving community at College of the Holy Cross and around the world.

2025 LGBTQ+ SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR: DR. JEFF WILLY



Jeff Willy

Out to Innovate is awarding Dr. Jeff Willy its LGBTQ+ Scientist of the Year in recognition of his contributions to toxicology research in his industrial and academic work.

Dr. Jeff Willy completed a dual degree as an undergraduate, a Bachelor of Science in Molecular Genetics from the University of Rochester and a Bachelor Music in Percussion from Eastman School of Music. After graduating, he faced a pivotal decision: pursue a Master's of Music at Jacob's School of Music or accept a job offer at Eli Lilly. Though the choice was difficult, two decades later — after contributing to the development of multiple life-changing medicines — he has no doubt that the pursuit of science was the right choice.

(continued on pg. 3)

“The most rewarding part of my work is witnessing the real-world impact these therapies have on patients’ lives,” said Willy.

Willy earned a Master’s in Biology from Purdue University and a PhD in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology from Indiana University School of Medicine, while continuing his work at Lilly. During this time, Willy specialized in pharmaceutical toxicology and went on to lead a team focused on mechanistic toxicology, guiding the development of safer, more effective therapies. Willy moved to Vertex Pharmaceuticals in 2018 and is currently their Senior Director of Toxicology and the Safety Site Head at their San Diego Research facility.

2025 WALT WESTMAN AWARD: KEI KOIZUMI



Kei Koizumi

Out to Innovate is awarding Koizumi its Walt Westman Award in recognition of his service to Out to Innovate as a board member, event speaker, and organizational advisor; and in recognition of his public service in support of

effective science and technology policy to benefit the United States and the world.

Kei Koizumi had planned to study international affairs when he entered graduate school at George Washington University. Early in that program, he took a course in science and technology policy that changed the direction of his career. In that class, Koizumi immediately recognized a link to his passions and experience that he had not expected. Koizumi had been educating himself in science policy since the mid-1980s through his work with ACT UP as they advocated for research funding to investigate HIV/AIDS.

After that first class, Koizumi changed his major to science and technology policy. That path has led to him having a role in two presidential administrations, culminating in his position as the Principal Deputy for Science, Society and Policy after also serving as Chief of Staff and Acting Director at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) during the Biden administration. Science and technology—and their links to economic, foreign, and health policies—were major foci for the Biden administration, giving Koizumi a prominent role in both domestic and international policy making.

BIOSCIENCE ARTICLE ON STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON LGBTQ+ FACULTY

An article published in BioScience in June examined whether LGBTQ+ status affected students’ perceptions and attitudes toward university faculty members. The findings revealed no negative impact between faculty identified as LGBTQ+ versus those that were not, even in LGBTQ+-unfriendly states.

Read more: <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biaf040>

OTI BOARD ATTENDS SOGI DATA SYMPOSIUM AND ASME PRIDE EVENTS

AAAS' Catalyzing a Data Infrastructure to Support LGBTQ Inclusion Initiative held a symposium in Washington, D.C. on June 11-12, 2025. Board members Dane Samilo and Ben Gerstner were in attendance. The symposium spotlighted the Queer and Trans People in Education's (QTPIE) research and covered a myriad of SOGI-data related topics.

Board member Amlan Mukherjee attended the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Pride events June 3-4 at World Pride in Washington, DC. At the social, Dr. Mark McBride was the plenary speaker who shared his work on mental health and suicide prevention in the workplace and intersections with LGBTQ+ workers.

2025 OUT TO INNOVATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT FELLOW: JOE MINTON

We are pleased to announce that Joe Minton is the recipient of the 2025 Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship. Joe just finished their 2nd year as graduate student at Northwestern University, where they study the genetic and molecular mechanisms underlying epilepsy and neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs).

Joe says: "I am both honored and grateful to be an Out to Innovate Fellow. In today's political climate, it is empowering to have my gender identity recognized and celebrated. This fellowship provides an invaluable opportunity to grow professionally by attending a specialized workshop that will strengthen both my technical and science communication skills in the field of neurogenetics. I am deeply thankful to Out to Innovate for this



Joe Minton

incredible opportunity, and to the LGBTQIA2S+ scientists who came before me – whose perseverance has made it possible for me to pursue my dream of becoming a neuroscientist."

The Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship, formerly the Ben Barres Fellowship, is an award for professional development of trans, intersex, and non-binary graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in STEM.

SUBMISSIONS

The **Out to Innovate Bulletin** is published quarterly, most of the time. Contributed articles are welcome and encouraged and may be emailed as plain text to editor@noglstp.org. The next publication deadline (for the fall newsletter) is **October 15, 2025**. Please acknowledge the Out to Innovate Bulletin as your source if you choose to reproduce any of these articles.

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