2021-03-03: 2021 Out to Innovate™ Ben Barres Fellowship Awardees Announced

Pasadena, CA, March 3 — Today, NOGLSTP, the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals, is proud to announce the winners for the 2020 NOGLSTP Ben Barres Fellowships made possible by an anonymous donor. The fellowships are named after Ben Barres, a distinguished transgender scientist at Stanford who researched the role of microglia, an immune cell of the brain, and its interaction with neurons in development and disease. Barres was an ardent campaigner for equal opportunity in science, advocating for underrepresented groups, and was a valued mentor to young scientists. He told his story through a posthumous memoir released after his death from cancer in 2017 at age 63.

Eleven applicants for NOGLSTP's Ben Barres Fellowship have been awarded amounts ranging from $2550 to $5000. The Ben Barres Fellowship award is for professional development of trans, intersex, and non-binary graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This year's fellows are in the fields of neuroscience, astronomy, astrophysics, biochemistry, biophysics, bioengineering, evolution, ecology, and microbiology at universities in the US, Canada, and England. This is a merit-based award, and the support provided is intended, broadly construed, for the recipient's professional development. Because of the pandemic, the majority of the funds were awarded for equipment, software, and supplies instead of travel.

The winners of these fellowships are not required to disclose their award in publicity for these awards. The winners who have allowed us to disclose their awards are:

Stephanie Nelli, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Stephanie Nelli is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Oxford University studying the ability to rapidly learn and reconfigure knowledge by human neuroimaging and neural network simulations.

Esti Blanco-Elorrieta, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Esti Blanco-Elorrieta is a Post-Doctoral fellow in Psychology at Harvard University's Cognitive Neuropsychology Laboratory studying the neurobiology of multilingualism by using a combination of neuroimaging, computational, and behavioral methods.

Kat Ellis-Guardiola, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Kat Ellis-Guardiola is a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles, investigating the underlying mechanisms of the proteins used by S. aureus to uptake heme.

Vivian Miranda, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben BarresFellow

Vivian Miranda is a Postdoctoral /Research Associate at the Steward Observatory of the University of Arizona, investigating dark energy through space missions in combination with ground-based observatories.

Tran Thanh Tam Pham, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Tran Thanh Tam Pham is a graduate student in biophysics at Dalhousie University studying the metabolomics of interaction between a G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR), the apelin receptor (AR), and its endogenous ligands, the bioactive apelin peptides.

Toby Santamaria, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Toby Santamaria is a graduate student in the College of Natural Science Department of Plant Biology at the Michigan State University, studying restoration ecology and terrestrial biogeochemistry.

Simón(e) Sun, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Simón(e) Sun is a graduate student at New York University, studying the plasticity of neurons in response to changes in activity levels.

Claudia Astorino, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Claudia Astorino is an evolutionary biologist and biological anthropologist finishing up a Ph.D. at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), in affiliation with the New York Consortium in Evolutionary Primatology, studying the variation of sexual dimorphism in the human skull.

Eliot Vrijmoet, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Eliot Halley Vrijmoet is a graduate student at Georgia State University Department of Physics and Astronomy, studying the sizes and shapes of multi-star systems orbits in the solar neighborhood (within 25 pc or 82 light-years of Earth).

Anita Simha, 2021 Out to Innovate Ben Barres Fellow

Anita Simha is a graduate student at Duke University, studying how plant species interact and coexist through the effect of fire history and the present community composition.

The winners will be invited to the next Out To Innovate™ Summit for LGBTQ+ People in STEM Awards ceremony the date to be announced later.

Disclaimer – These awards are not related to the Ben Barres Fellowship given by Stanford University and the Ben Barres Family.

Out to Innovate™ is:

a professional society and global community of LGBTQ+ students and professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

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