



National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals dba Out to Innovate
PO Box 91803, Pasadena CA 91109
outtoinnovate.org

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2023-03-01: Out to Innovate awards career development fellowships to Brown, Cuddleston, Kepinska, Meyer, Mueller, Paik, Quin, Sosa, Spiker, Van Kamp

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2023 Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship for Trans and Non-Binary People in STEM , formerly known as the Ben Barres Fellowship. This merit-based fellowship provides awards, up to \$5000, to support professional development of trans, intersex, and non-binary graduate students and post-doctoral scholars in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Eleven trans, intersex, and non-binary early career researchers have been awarded amounts ranging from \$2,300 to \$5,000. This year's fellows are in the fields of ecology, aging, astrophysics, math and physics education, biomedical sciences, and statistics at universities in the US, UK, and Canada. This is a merit-based award, and the funds support the recipient's professional development. These awards are funded by a generous anonymous donor. The majority of the funds are supporting equipment, supplies, training courses, and conference attendance. The winners of this year's awards are:

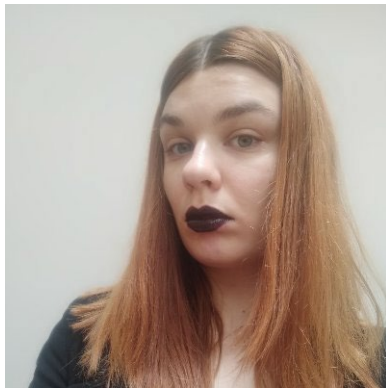


Dr. Matilda Brown is a postdoctoral scholar at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew where they model plant extinction in an effort to improve endangered species classifications. *“This fellowship means an incredible amount to me. As well as allowing me to share my research at a global forum of conservation researchers, it feels great to be celebrated for being non-binary.”*



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Winston Cuddleston is a graduate student of Biomedical Sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. His work helps identify novel molecular and cellular mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease as potential therapeutic targets. *"I am extremely grateful to be recognized as an Out to Innovate Career Development Fellow. This award provides support for me to present my research and establish connections with my colleagues that will promote success in my career."*



Dr. Adrianna Kępińska is a postdoctoral scholar at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai where they study the genetics of postpartum psychosis. *"I am honoured to be awarded the OTI Fellowship. Professionally, it will enable me to continue my research and to complete extra training in statistical genetics, allowing me to further refine my scientific skillset. The Fellowship will fund access to data on postpartum psychosis, which, as a both very severe and very rare disorder impacting parents and children, has been exceedingly difficult to research and treat. Given the current scarcity of findings, it is very important to me to deliver studies on this topic,*

which are carefully conducted and produce high quality results. I am grateful that the Fellowship will enable me to this important end. Personally, I am delighted for this recognition. In my academic field of psychiatric genetics, there are still relatively few role models who identify as non-binary, like I do. I hope that this award can be proof to fellow early-career queer academics that there are successful futures, professional possibilities, and wider recognition available to us."

Josie Meyer is a graduate student at the University of Colorado-Boulder in Physics Education Research where she develops evidence-based teaching practices for Quantum Information Sciences. *"For those of us trying to change the system of STEM from within, particularly in the STEM education research community, it can be particularly difficult to access the very professional development funds we need to be most effective in our mission. Thanks to the Out to Innovate fellowship, I will have the opportunity to present my research beyond the education research community to reach the audiences who may be able to benefit the most from hearing it."*





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Taz Mueller is a graduate student in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Their work studying fungal microbes in plant leaves will help dissect the interconnected effects on the host plant. *“I am thrilled and honored to be a recipient of the Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship. It can be both rewarding and isolating to visibly represent non-binary scientists in the field of Ecology & Evolution, but the existence of this fellowship is a testament to the incredible power of the queer community and the remarkable progress that has been made in STEM fields and academia. To go from often being the only*

openly trans voice in a room to being able to accept a fellowship that explicitly celebrates and supports queer and trans scientists is incredibly meaningful to me. Additionally, the financial support that the OTI Career Development Fellowship provides in covering my research expenses is crucial to the completion of my PhD, and it will facilitate my ability to continue working towards inclusion and equity for the queer community in STEM.”

Jenn Paik is a graduate student at the University of Michigan developing a multifunctional organohydrogel material which has possible applications as a transparent, skin-adhesive strain sensor for motion monitoring in biomedical applications. *“I express my identity as a non-binary person primarily through visual art and writing while hiding it in science & engineering environments. In my personal statement, I drew a parallel between art and soft materials development, describing my science as a creative art that benefits from the ideas that percolate throughout a diverse social sphere. In both materials development and art, the starting materials provide the parameters for creativity. By expanding the social sphere in which science is performed, we can broaden the parameters of creativity, and therefore I need to acknowledge my identity as a LGBTQ+ person of color and be the representation I wish to see in the field. This fellowship is the first time I have been able to publicly acknowledge my identity in such a significant way.”*





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Clara Qin is a graduate student at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She uses computational methods to understand the macroecology of soil microorganisms in unmanaged and agricultural systems with applications for organic crop disease control. *“I am honored to be the recipient of an OTI Career Development Fellowship. To me, this fellowship means that trans and queer people deserve to be recognized not only for their mere presence in the sciences but also for their professional achievements and their attentiveness to science’s broader societal impacts. The funding provided to me will be used to advance an interdisciplinary understanding of soil microbial macroecology in managed and unmanaged systems with applications for*

organic crop disease control. Through this research, I hope to demonstrate that even my fairly abstract field has the potential to create exciting new possibilities for just and sustainable food systems.”

Sophia Sosa is an Astrophysics graduate student at the Rochester Institute of Technology developing methods for using pulsar timing to detect gravitational waves. *“In an academic world that, more often than not, has been historically characterized by segregation and exclusion, the Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship serves as a beacon of hope. I remain incredibly thankful and filled with gratitude for this recognition, not only because it represents an extraordinary opportunity to advance my research and my career but also on a personal level because it reaffirms my belief that LGBTQ+ people belong in the scientific community.”*





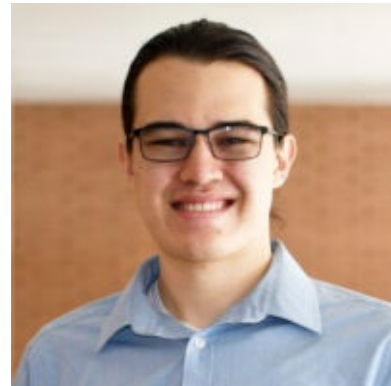
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Dr. Dylan Spicker is a postdoctoral scholar at McGill University where they develop novel statistical techniques for personalized medicine and public health applications. *“The OTI Fellowship will provide crucial, material support for my research, removing barriers and inefficiencies which I presently face. More saliently than the financial component is the visibility and recognition stemming from the fellowship. By affirming the important work that trans*, intersex, and non- binary individuals are conducting in STEM, the fellowship helps to lend credibility to the viability of this career path for people who may otherwise*

not see themselves represented here. I am appreciative that, with the assistance of this fellowship, I may be able to make the field of Statistics more inviting in ways that would have eased my journey to this point.”

Bennett Van Camp is a graduate student in the Biology of Aging Doctoral Program at the University of Southern California. *“I am extremely honored to have received the Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowship. With these funds, I will be able to attend one of the most prestigious conferences in my field, which will not only greatly increase the visibility of my work but also better connect me to the international field of geroscience. Additionally, this fellowship will give me the opportunity to create a network of support within the queer academic community as we push for equitable representation in the highest levels of our fields.”*



In addition to the winners announced here, we are proud to support one fellow who wishes to remain anonymous.

Out to Innovate is a professional society and global community of LGBTQ+ students and professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. For more information about the Out to Innovate Career Development Fellowships for Trans and Non-Binary People in STEM, visit our website at <https://outtoinnovate.org/home>