



STEM



14th Annual Conference for LGBTQ+ People in STEM



# Cultivating Pride & Resiliency

*LGBTQ+ Leaders in STEM*

OCTOBER 17 - 20, 2024  
PORTLAND, OR



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# Table of Contents

Letter from Our Conference Chairs	4
Letter from Our President	5
Organizational Advisory Council	6
Our Exhibitors & Partners	7
Conference Team	13
Conference Etiquette	14
Conference Lanyards & Accommodations	16
Conference Resources & Crisis Info	17
Schedule	18
Thursday Programming Descriptions	19
Friday Programming Descriptions	20
Saturday Programming Descriptions	25
Sunday Programming Descriptions	30
Plenary Session Speakers	32
Workshop Block 1 Descriptions (Thursday)	36
Workshop Block 2 Descriptions (Thursday)	41
Workshop Block 3 Descriptions (Friday)	45
Workshop Block 4 Descriptions (Friday)	52
Workshop Block 5 Descriptions (Friday)	56
Workshop Block 6 Descriptions (Saturday)	61
Workshop Block 7 Descriptions (Saturday)	66
Blank Note Pages	69



# Letter from Our Conference Chairs

Dear oSTEM Conference Attendee,

Welcome to the 14th Annual oSTEM Conference! We are delighted to gather with you in Portland, the City of Roses, to celebrate this year’s theme of Cultivating Pride and Resiliency. Whether it is your first or fourteenth time in this special community, we can’t wait to share these next few days with you.

This year’s theme reflects the remarkable impact of our members, chapters, advisors, and partners. In the face of unprecedented challenges to our community, you have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and strength. From chapters creating safe spaces when resource centers close to members speaking out against discriminatory legislation to partners fostering allyship through company-wide initiatives, your efforts inspire pride in our community.

We have curated an inspiring program and sincerely hope you will make the most of our time together. You will hear from influential speakers who are leaders in various STEM fields, engage in workshops that develop both professional and personal skills, and explore cutting-edge research that showcases the latest advancements. Additionally, there are ample opportunities for networking and connecting with peers and industry professionals, all while gaining insights to help your career flourish.

As you navigate this conference, we encourage you to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and share your perspectives. Take advantage of the networking sessions and explore new areas of research and innovation. This conference is your space to grow, connect, and let your talents blossom.

We are thrilled to welcome you into our community, and we encourage you to connect, support, and uplift one another during this conference!

Warmly,

Avery Cunningham (he/him) &  
Billie Harrer (they/them)  
2024 Conference Co-Chairs



# Letter from Our President

Dear oSTEM Conference Attendee,

I am thrilled to welcome you to Portland, Oregon! Your presence truly makes our volunteers' hard work worthwhile, and we're committed to making this year's conference a memorable experience for everyone.

Reflecting on my first oSTEM conference a decade ago at Georgia Tech, I remember how transformative that experience was for me. Since then, I have had the honor and privilege of helping others have similar life changing experiences through my various roles at oSTEM.

As you may have noticed, we've upgraded our venue to better suit our growth—from 450 attendees in 2014 to nearly 1,200 last year! While navigating a larger space can be a bit daunting, it's also a wonderful sign of our thriving community. Thank you for being here and contributing to our journey.

While you're here, I hope that you take advantage of all the opportunities presented to you here this weekend. oSTEM conference uniquely celebrates the convergence of STEM expertise and LGBTQ+ identities. You'll find a diverse array of STEM professionals, from astrophysicists to cellular biologists, and engineers of every specialization imaginable, plus a couple you couldn't. Revel in those moments when you connect with someone who speaks your professional language, whether it's discussing transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt placement or anomalous electroweak sphaleron transition baryogenesis.

While our shared passion for STEM unites us, the conference also embraces our LGBTQ+ identities. Take advantage of the oSTEM Closet to look and feel your best for the Career and Graduate School Expo, gain insights from our incredible lineup of keynote speakers, and join in our affinity groups to discuss shared identities.

Seek out experiences that shape you as both a STEM professional and a member of the LGBTQ+ community while you are here. These will shape your life in unknowable ways, and may even inspire you to take on leadership roles within oSTEM itself.

Enjoy the conference and I look forward to seeing you in 2025!



Matthew Welmers (he/him)  
oSTEM President





# Thank You to Our Organizational Advisory Council Members

The Organizational Advisory Council (OAC) is a premier year-round partnership comprised of companies, government agencies, educational institutions and non-profits committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion and success.



*Contact [sponsorship@ostem.org](mailto:sponsorship@ostem.org) to learn more about the benefits and how to get involved.*

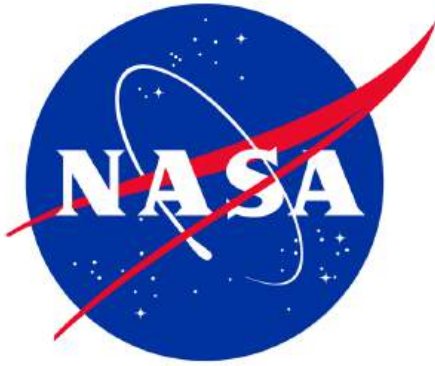
# Thank You to Our Platinum Exhibitors



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A graphic element for the Naval Nuclear Laboratory logo, consisting of three curved lines in orange, yellow, and blue.



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# Thank You to Our Academic Partners



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Society of Women Engineers

**THRIVE**  
*Lifeline*

Thriving Harnesses Respect, Inclusion, and Vested Empathy

**TRAVEL**  
**PORTLAND**



# Thank You to Our Conference Team

## Volunteers

**Avery Cunningham**, *Conference Co-Chair*

**Billie Harrer**, *Conference Co-Chair*

**Sam Krug**, *Programming Chair*

Aaron Lytle  
Abby Ray  
Ace Harris  
Adam Blackburn  
AJ Bryant  
Animesh Paul  
Andy Liang  
Brianna Hoegler  
Calum Ridyard  
Caitlyn Gilmartin  
Casady Wyckoff  
C.J. Zuk  
Courtney Amster  
Damian Salonick  
Daniel Ruiz  
Eric Patridge

Erin Bryant-Ross  
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Jackson Bailey  
Janghoon Yoon  
Janine van Niekerk  
Jared Canright  
Javier Rosario  
Jonathan Lee  
Josh LaBounty  
Juan Vasquez  
M Wittkop  
Matthew Welmers  
Murphy Haubert  
Naomi Schwartz  
Nik Narain  
Nova Moore

Oliver Nicholson  
Peter Li  
Phillip Palanca  
Rachael Kondrat  
Raisa Glabman  
Rem Zhang  
Ronin Hulett  
Sean Quinlan  
Shawn Christensen  
Smrutimedha Parida  
Suri Bandyopadhyay  
Tatyana Graesser  
Trisha Butz  
William Agnew  
Xanadu Roque  
Zia Bresnahan

## Staff Members

**Lilian M. Martinez**, *Executive Director & CEO*

**Linda Aragon**, *Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations*

**Jamie Gonzales**, *Director of Community Relations & Events*

**The annual oSTEM conference is made possible by volunteers.**

If you'd like to learn more about getting involved in planning next year's conference, please visit the oSTEM table at the Expo or visit us online at [oSTEM.org](http://oSTEM.org).

# Conference Etiquette

## Initial Assumptions

Some of the individuals you will encounter at oSTEM events may not have gender presentations or articulations that you are accustomed to. Gender articulation is “a person’s behavior, mannerisms, interests, and/or appearance used to portray their gender identity, often (but not always) within the categories of that which is stereotypically feminine or masculine.” For example, in American culture, a floral dress may be typically associated with a “feminine” gender articulation.

Here, you may see someone that you perceive to be a man wearing bright makeup or beautiful, flowing dresses. We pride ourselves on our ability to provide a brave space where our attendees, exhibitors, and friends feel comfortable bringing their entire selves to our gatherings. These differences are not reasons to be alarmed. Attendees are people first and are to be respected regardless of their presentation or identity.

Although gender and its nuances may seem confusing, we can ensure that everyone shares common knowledge by providing some basic terminology as follows:

- **Sex assigned at birth:** the label of male or female given to a newborn infant based upon visible primary sex characteristics; gendered expectations are generally placed upon the infant based upon this determination, e.g, girls must wear pink, boys must have short hair, etc.
- **Gender:** the socially constructed characteristics of being masculine and/or feminine, including norms, roles or behaviors associated with a particular identity
- **Gender expression/articulation:** a person’s behavior, mannerisms, interests, and/or appearance used to portray their gender identity, often (but not always) within the categories of that which is stereotypically feminine or masculine
- **Sexual orientation:** a person’s identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted; the fact of being heterosexual, homosexual, etc.
- **Romantic orientation:** attraction that makes an individual desire romantic contact or interaction with another person

## Restrooms

Trans and gender non-conforming people often face harassment and violence when using public restrooms. Each of our attendees and exhibitors is entitled to feel comfortable using the restroom of their choice. For this reason, all of the restrooms in our conference space have been designated “all-gender.” They are marked by a toilet icon on the venue map provided at registration and on the Whova app. Do not stop anyone from using a bathroom based on how you interpret their gender.



# Conference Etiquette

## Being an Ally

**Be mindful of diversity in minds, bodies, and presentations.** Do not point or stare, do not take photos of attendees without explicit consent, and do not gossip about others. People are aware of these things when they happen and doing so can feel violating, ranging from making others mildly uncomfortable to being terrified for their safety.

**Do not make gendered assumptions.** Gender is fluid and subjective and many of our attendees will fall at places along and outside of the spectra of gender, sex, and presentation. Do not assume the gender, identity, or pronouns of a person. As badges are required while engaging in conference programming, look for someone's pronouns there. You can also ask. However, if you decide to do this, make it practice to ask everyone you meet, not just those people who may not fit into a specific gender stereotype.

It is best to introduce yourself with your name and pronouns, as this creates an invitation for others to do the same. Along with he/him/his and she/her/hers, you may also encounter pronouns like they/them/theirs and ze/zir/zirs. Do not use gendered honorifics such as "sir" or "ma'am." If asked for your pronouns, please offer them if you are comfortable doing so.

**Hold others accountable for their actions.** If you see another person engaging in harmful actions, do not be afraid to call attention to it. Harmful actions can include intentionally misgendering attendees, ignoring pronoun usage or name pronunciation, as well as more overt forms of harassment. If you cannot intervene or are uncomfortable doing so, seek assistance from an oSTEM staff or volunteer.

**oSTEM understands we are all human.** Mistakes happen, but consider them an opportunity for growth! If you catch yourself using incorrect pronouns, making assumptions, or using gendered language, simply apologize with an "I'm sorry" and keep moving forward. Learn from the mistake and do better next time. If you have any questions, you can reference this guide, visit our information desk, or ask an oSTEM staff or volunteer for clarification.

**When in doubt, ask conference staff or volunteers (wearing **YELLOW** lanyards!)**



# Conference Lanyards & Accommodations

## Lanyard Color Communication

You will see different colored lanyards at the oSTEM conference, each with a different meaning.

**YELLOW** – *I’m an oSTEM staff member or volunteer. Reach out if you have questions or need assistance!*

**PURPLE** – *I’m a THRIVE volunteer and trained to help in a crisis.*

**RED**– *I am not comfortable with my photos being taken or shared. In order to keep everyone safe and respect each other’s boundaries, please do not photograph or record these individuals. Please make sure you don’t see any individuals with red lanyards in your photos or videos as you share your experiences with others.*

**WHITE** – *I am attending the conference or expo and I’m fine with my photo being taken. Even so, we recommend that unless you’re the oSTEM photographer, you ask permission before sharing their photos with others.*

*This year’s white attendee lanyards are made possible by Chevron. Thank you for your support.*

## Accessibility and Accommodations

We have taken care to think about a diverse range of accessibility needs and make accommodations in advance. However, if you have an accommodations request or need more information during the conference, please visit our registration desk or find an oSTEM volunteer near you. Alternatively, you can direct your accessibility or accommodations concerns to [access@ostem.org](mailto:access@ostem.org).

Priority seating is provided for those who require it and designated with signage. Please leave these seats free unless you have need.

*Many of our accessibility accommodations are made possible by Chevron. Thank you for your support.*



# Conference Resources & Crisis Information



## Content Warnings

Much like our experience as LGBTQ+ people in the world, some of the content you encounter will be light and fun and some will address heavier, but equally important, topics. In an effort to inform our attendees, we have asked speakers and presenters to identify potential triggers where possible and flag those with appropriate content warnings. However, in the event that a session does touch on sensitive topics and you find yourself wanting more support, please feel free to exit the space and find one of our THRIVE partners in a **PURPLE** lanyard or visit the Decompression Zone.

## Decompression Zone

Our Decompression Zone remains an important staple of the conference. This space is intentionally designed for attendees to provide space to find calm or take a moment to yourself. The Decompression Zone is located in room C126 and will be available beginning at 12:00 PM on Thursday. The full list of hours is available on the Whova app.

## Crisis Resources

Our partners at THRIVE Lifeline will be providing attendees with free peer-based mental health support all weekend long. THRIVE is here for you however you need to feel affirmed: calm your nerves, catch your breath, feel grounded, process something traumatic, discover an identity, navigate coming out challenges, validate your gender or sexuality, work through a crisis, and more.



Talk to THRIVE:

- In person hours in Room C127
  - Thursday, October 17: 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM
  - Friday, October 18: 8:30 AM - 6:30 PM
  - Saturday, October 19: 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
  - Sunday, October 20: 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- By text, available 24/7/365 by **texting "PRIDE" to 1-313-662-8209.**



*This year's crisis support is made possible in part by Chevron. Thank you for your support.*



# Conference Schedule

*Note: All times are listed in Pacific Time.*

## THURSDAY, OCT. 17

12:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Registration & Help Desks Open
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	OAC Meeting & Lunch <i>Invite Only</i>
12:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Donations for oSTEM Closet Accepted
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM	New to the Conference Session
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Allyship in Motion <i>Invite Only</i>
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	Workshop Block 1
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Workshop Block 2
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM	Membership Mixers

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



[bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda](https://bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda)

## FRIDAY, OCT. 18

7:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Registration Desk Open
7:00 AM - 6:00 PM	Help Desk Open
7:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Donations for oSTEM Closet Accepted
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast Plenary ( <i>Doors open at 7:30 AM</i> )
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Allyship in Motion <i>Invite Only</i>
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	Workshop Block 3
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM	oSTEM Closet Open
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Career & Grad School Expo Success Clinic
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Workshop Block 4
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Lunch Plenary ( <i>Doors open at 11:30 AM</i> )
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Career & Graduate School Expo
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Workshop Block 5
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM	Sponsored Networking Session: Chevron
8:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Evening Social

## SATURDAY, OCT. 19

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration Desk Open
7:00 AM - 6:00 PM	Help Desk Open
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Workshop Block 6
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Poster Presentation 1
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	oSTEM Closet Open
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Poster Presentation 2
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Career & Graduate School Expo
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Workshop Block 7
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	Closing Plenary ( <i>Doors open at 4:00 PM</i> )
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Sponsored Networking Session: Arup
8:00 PM - 9:30 PM	oSTEM Gala <i>Ticketed Event (Doors open at 7:30 PM)</i>

## SUNDAY, OCT. 20

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Help Desk Open
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Gender Affirmation Symposium
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Decompression Creative Zone
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Volunteering with oSTEM

# Thursday Programming Descriptions

## **New to the Conference Session (1:30 PM - 2:00 PM)**

*Conference Co-Chairs: Avery Cunningham and Billie Harrer*

If this is your first oSTEM Conference, then this is the program for you! Come join oSTEM Conference co-chairs, Avery Cunningham and Billie Harrer, to learn about what our conference has to offer. We will cover general conference tips and etiquette, the types of programs and workshops offered throughout the weekend, and provide opportunities to ask questions about oSTEM and the Annual Conference as a whole.

## **Allyship in Motion (2:00 PM - 5:00 PM)**

*Pre-registration is required for this session.*

Allyship in Motion by oSTEM moves beyond the messages of “hiring diversity” to give participants the allyship tools necessary to recruit, retain, and support underserved LGBTQ+ candidates on a day-to-day basis. Participants of this training will receive a badge flag and certificate that signifies they have completed this training. This is a closed session available only to pre-registered attendees.

## **Workshop Block 1 (2:15 PM - 3:15 PM)**

Please see the Workshop Block 1 descriptions on Page 36.

## **Workshop Block 2 (3:30 PM - 4:30 PM)**

Please see the Workshop Block 2 descriptions on Page 41.

## **Membership Mixers (5:00 PM - 6:30 PM)**

Find and connect with oSTEM members from across the world during our Member Mixers! Come meet fellow students and professionals as well as company representatives. Feel free to explore and visit spaces that best fit you!

Room C120 - Science and Engineering

Room C123 - Technology and Mathematics

Room C124 - Professional and International Members

# Friday Programming Descriptions

## Breakfast Plenary: A Fireside Chat on Resiliency and Community Strength (7:30 AM - 9:00 AM)

*Doors open at 7:30 AM. Please find your seats by 8:00 AM.*

This year's conference, themed Cultivating Pride & Resiliency, begins with a fireside chat that embodies the essence of our gathering. As we come together to explore how to strengthen and sustain our communities, we are honored to hear from three distinguished leaders who exemplify resilience in action.

Our opening keynote is a fireside chat featuring Liz Elsen, Amanda Keller, and Lauren Jacobs. Liz Elsen, now Director of Education & Training at The Center on Colfax, will share insights from their time as Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center at the University of Texas at Austin, which was forced to close due to recent legislative changes. Joining them are Amanda Keller, Director of the Magic City Acceptance Center (MCAC) in Birmingham, Alabama, and Lauren Jacobs, Assistant Director of MCAC. Through their personal experiences and advocacy work, Liz, Amanda, and Lauren will share invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities of fostering pride in environments that often resist it.

## Allyship in Motion (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

*Pre-registration is required for this session.*

Allyship in Motion by oSTEM moves beyond the messages of "hiring diversity" to give participants the allyship tools necessary to recruit, retain, and support underserved LGBTQ+ candidates on a day-to-day basis. Participants of this training will receive a badge flag and certificate that signifies they have completed this training. This is a closed session available only to pre-registered attendees.

## Workshop Block 3 (9:15 AM - 10:15 AM)

Please see the Workshop Block 3 descriptions on Page 45.

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



[bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda](https://bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda)



# Friday Programming Descriptions

## oSTEM Closet: Step Out in Style (10:00 AM - 6:00 PM)

Stop by and leave looking fabulous and ready to strut the Expo Hall! Everyone is welcome to come and find gender affirming attire so you can present yourself confidently to potential employers or schools.

If you have extra clothes you'd like to donate, please bring them. We are accepting clean, gently used, little to no damage professional and business attire. You may drop off your donations at the conference swag desk starting Thursday at 12:00 PM.

If you'd like to browse the selections to find something to help you feel your best, you're welcome to attend the oSTEM Closet in C125 on Friday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. All clothes are free for attendees to keep. Any items not claimed at the end of the conference will be donated to a local organization in Portland.

## Career & Grad School Expo Success Clinic (10:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

Networking is one of the greatest benefits of professional conferences. However, it can be intimidating, especially if you're just starting your career! Our solution is this informal success clinic which will serve as an icebreaker for conference attendees. Warm up your networking skills and receive immediate resume/CV feedback from academic and industry reps before the Career & Graduate School Expo.

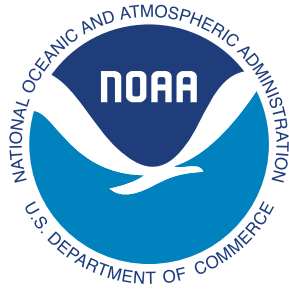
### **How to Prepare:**

- Bring a digital or hard-copy resume or CV to be reviewed and/or
- Bring a draft of your elevator pitch (i.e. how you plan to introduce yourself to recruiters and representatives at the career and grad school fair)

*Due to high demand, each session will last 10-12 minutes.*

## Workshop Block 4 (10:30 AM - 11:30 AM)

Please see the Workshop Block 4 descriptions on Page 52.



# NOAA

*is proud to support the*  
**Annual Conference for LGBTQ+ in STEM**



NOAA Careers

NOAA successfully achieves its wide range of environment-focused missions through the support of a highly-skilled, passionate and diverse workforce, which includes federal employees, contractors, grantees, as well as dedicated volunteers. We hope you will explore opportunities with NOAA, and join us in **enhancing life through science.**

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by the brightest  
people in the  
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out more at [careers.pfizer.com](https://careers.pfizer.com)

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# Friday Programming Descriptions

## Lunch Plenary: Science Communication in the Age of TikTok (11:30 AM - 1:00 PM)

*Doors open at 11:30 AM. Please find your seats by 12:00 PM.*

TikTok has reshaped the way we communicate online, and Science Communication is no exception. In this talk, Savannah Geary will explore the science “niche” within the TikTok ecosystem, both the good (making science accessible) and the bad (misinformation and stolen content). They’ll also share insights into the structure and pacing of successful science content on the platform, as well as offer practical tips and tools for science communicators wanting to create engaging short-format videos themselves.

## Career & Graduate School Expo (1:30 PM - 5:30 PM)

Meet our universities, companies, and government agencies. Our exhibitors are looking for motivated and engaged talent, like yourselves, so be sure to bring your CV/resume and dress in your interview best. Be prepared to share why you would be a good fit for that summer internship, full-time position, graduate school, or fellowship. There will be contests and other fun activities during the Expo. Please be sure to check Whova for the latest so you can join in!



*Scan for Expo Map!  
[ostem2024.expofp.com](https://ostem2024.expofp.com)*

## Workshop Block 5 (5:00 PM - 6:00 PM)

Please see the Workshop Block 5 descriptions on Page 56.

## Sponsored Networking Session (6:30 PM - 8:00 PM)

### ***An Evening with Chevron - Ignite, Connect, and Energize***

Get ready for an evening of connections as Chevron welcomes you to an informal networking reception. You’re invited to chat with our team and other attendees over refreshments and appetizers.

Join us as we unwind and celebrate our shared passion for energy. Chevron’s here to add a spark to your networking game. No formalities, just pure energy. See you there!



# Friday Programming Descriptions

## Evening Social (8:00 PM - 10:00 PM)

Join us for a night of karaoke with our drag emcee and performer, Portland's own Nicole Onosciopi! Come have some kara-fun with fellow oSTEM members and show off your musical talents this Friday night. Bring some friends (or make some new ones) and sign up for an unforgettable night of fun! *Light refreshments provided.*

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RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW



Learn more at  
[intelligencecareers.gov](http://intelligencecareers.gov)

# Saturday Programming Descriptions

## Workshop Block 6 (8:30 AM - 9:30 AM)

Please see the Workshop Block 6 descriptions on Page 61.

## Poster Session (9:30 AM - 11:30 AM)

Join us for our annual Poster Session, a vibrant showcase of innovative research and creative projects by LGBTQ+ students and professionals in STEM fields. This event provides a unique platform for participants to present their work, engage in meaningful discussions, and receive valuable feedback from peers and mentors in the LGBTQ+ community. Attendees will be able to explore diverse topics, ranging from cutting-edge scientific studies to community-focused initiatives. Whether you're a presenter or an observer, this session fosters collaboration and connection within the STEM community. Come celebrate the intersection of diversity and innovation at this year's conference!

Back this year, attendees who visit the Poster Session will have the opportunity to vote on their favorite poster for the People's Choice award. Prizes will also be awarded to top undergraduate, graduate, post-doctoral, and professional poster.

Poster Presentation 1 is from 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM. Poster Presentation 2 is from 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM. A full abstract booklet is available on our website and the Whova app.

*This year's Poster Sessions are made possible in part by Wacker Chemical. Thank you for your support.*



For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Saturday Programming Descriptions

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## **Career & Graduate School Expo (11:00 AM - 3:00 PM)**

Meet our universities, companies, and government agencies. Our exhibitors are looking for motivated and engaged talent, like yourselves, so be sure to bring your CV/resume and dress in your interview best. Be prepared to share why you would be a good fit for that summer internship, full-time position, graduate school, or fellowship. There will be contests and other fun activities during the Expo. Please be sure to check Whova for the latest so you can join in!



*Scan for Expo Map!*  
[ostem2024.expofp.com](https://ostem2024.expofp.com)

## **Workshop Block 7 (3:00 PM - 4:00 PM)**

Please see the Workshop Block 7 descriptions on Page 66.



# MAKE WAVES

## Invest in Engineering Innovation

Navy Civilian Careers is a place where people who want to make a difference in the world will find a welcome home. Where STEM professionals can put their innovative thinking on the line. Where people looking for a challenge can ride the wave of the future.

We are looking for the best and brightest to join us in our mission supporting the U.S. Navy.

*See what a difference you can make.*



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# ONE MISSION, MANY VOICES

Dex says people feel heard when NSA implements policies such as upgrading its IT infrastructure to encouraging employees to use their preferred names and pronouns.

## NSA offers:

- An Inclusive Environment
- Respect for People as a Core Value
- 10 Employee Resource Groups

**Dex W.**  
Cloud Architect and  
NSA PRIDE ERG member



NSA  
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# Saturday Programming Descriptions

## Closing Plenary (4:00 PM - 5:15 PM)

*Doors open at 4:00 PM. Please find your seats by 4:15 PM.*

Kihana Wilson is a first gen astrophysicist, writer, and science communicator who advocates for representation in STEM fields. As a Black, masculine-presenting lesbian, she emphasizes the importance of diverse voices in science. Wilson, a recent graduate from The University of Chicago with a degree in Astrophysics, now works as a Cosmology researcher at Argonne National Laboratory. She uses her platforms to share her experiences and challenges, aiming to inspire underrepresented groups to pursue scientific careers. She also embraces her identity through fashion and confidence in professional spaces.

## Sponsored Networking Session (5:30 PM - 7:00 PM)

### **Value Driven Work @ Arup Networking Social**

Arup is a global engineering, architecture, and design consulting firm with a focus in sustainability and a commitment to the well-being of all its employees. One of the ways Arup upholds these values is through the advocacy of employee-driven resource groups (ERGs) like Connect Out, Viva Arup, and ASPIRE (Asians and Pacific Islanders Rising and Empowering). Join Ananth and Oscar from Arup for a conversation about what it's like to work in the consulting industry and how involvement in ERGs can go a long way to fostering a welcoming work environment for all. Light refreshments will be provided.

Arup is currently looking to hire motivated candidates for various full-time and internship positions in offices across the country. Join our session to learn more.

## oSTEM Gala (7:30 PM - 9:30 PM)

*Doors open at 7:30 PM. Please find your seats by 8:00 PM.*

Join us for an unforgettable evening at the inaugural oSTEM Gala. Experience a night of elegance, connection, and celebration. Dress to impress and enjoy delicious food, an awards ceremony honoring LGBTQ+ STEM achievements, and live entertainment!

*This is a ticketed event.*

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



[bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda](https://bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda)



# Sunday Programming Descriptions

## Gender Affirmation Symposium (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

The Gender Affirmation Symposium is an inclusive and non-judgmental space hosted at the 14th Annual oSTEM Conference. The Symposium is a closed session for attendees who are Two-Spirit, transgender, agender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary, and those who are questioning their gender. Our goal is to connect attendees with people who share similar identities to safely support intimate conversations. This year, we are exploring the way gender influences our art and science. The session will be divided into two sections: a main panel with question-and-answer session followed by topic-specific breakout groups for attendees. These smaller group discussions are designed to encourage open and thoughtful sharing of information between members of the community.

## Volunteering with oSTEM (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM)

*Caitlyn Gilmartin*

As the conference wraps up, are you looking for more ways to get involved with oSTEM? Do you want to make a positive impact in your community or the world? Join this session to learn how you can use your skills, time, and enthusiasm as an oSTEM volunteer. In this session, experienced oSTEM volunteers will share how volunteers can create real change. You'll find out how to connect your values and interests with projects that excite you. Learn how to use your unique skills to make a difference and discover tips for highlighting your volunteer experiences on your resume. You'll also hear from current volunteers about what inspired them to get involved, what keeps them committed, and their personal stories of growth through volunteering. By the end of the session, you'll know about our current projects and available volunteer opportunities with oSTEM, leaving you motivated to start making a difference when you get home.



*If you're interested in volunteering and unable to attend this session, please scan the QR code or visit [bit.ly/oSTEM-volunteer](http://bit.ly/oSTEM-volunteer) to learn more.*

## Decompression Creative Zone (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM)

Step into a world where creativity knows no bounds! Our conference's Decompression Creative Zone is a vibrant space where attendees are invited to explore, experiment, and embrace the full spectrum of human identity. Whether you're an established artist, a novice seeking inspiration, or simply want to explore your own identity through the artistic process, this creative space offers a dedicated environment for you! Join us for an opportunity for self-discovery and reflection as the conference comes to a close.

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# A Fireside Chat on Resiliency and Community Strength

Breakfast Plenary

Friday, October 18, 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

*Doors open at 7:30 AM. Please find your seats by 8:00 AM.*

## **Amanda Keller**

*Director of the Magic City Acceptance Center*

Amanda (she/her), a proud Cleveland native, moved to Alabama in 2006 and earned her BA in Philosophy from The University of Alabama at Birmingham. As the Founding Director of the Magic City Acceptance Center (MCAC), Amanda has created a radically inclusive space for the LGBTQIA community in Birmingham since 2014. Under her leadership, MCAC has provided vital support to over 2,152 LGBTQ youth ages 13-20, fostering resilience and community empowerment.



In 2020, recognizing the broader needs of the community, MCAC expanded its programs to serve families, adults, and elders, reaching individuals across 53 counties in Alabama. Amanda also curates "Family Matters: LGBTQ Youth Perspectives," a powerful photography exhibition by Carolyn Sherer that premiered at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and was a finalist for the Outwin Boochever Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in 2016.

Before her work with MCAC, Amanda served as Finance Director at Birmingham AIDS Outreach, where she championed equitable access to healthcare for people living with HIV. She is a proud graduate of the 2019 American Express Leadership Academy and actively serves on the Board of the Children's Policy Council and Mayor Woodfin's LGBTQ Advisory Board.

Amanda's contributions have been recognized through numerous awards, including the 2015 Simpkins/Talley Spirit of Pride Award and the 2018 Sylvia Rivera Game Changer Award. She was also honored as one of 2018 Birmingham Business Journal's "Women to Watch" and recognized as a distinguished young alumni by UAB's College of Arts and Sciences in 2020. Through her relentless advocacy, Amanda continues her commitment to uplift and empower marginalized voices, fostering resilience within her community.



## **Lauren Jacobs**

*Assistant Director of the Magic City Acceptance Center*

Lauren Jacobs (she/her) is Assistant Director at the Magic City Acceptance Center (MCAC) in Birmingham, Alabama. At MCAC, Lauren provides community-building programs and sexual wellness/healthy relationship education for LGBTQ youth ages 13-20, as well as social supportive services for LGBTQ kids, families, and adults. Lauren is a Birmingham native whose advocacy around LGBTQ issues began as a student in high school. She became heavily involved in organizing at The University of Alabama where her work involved coalition building with a network of LGBTQ college student groups around the Southeastern U.S., and developing programs and events around gender, sexuality, racial and reproductive justice. Lauren was a principal organizer for the Southeastern LGBTQ Student Leadership Conference, offering space for hundreds of students to build a diverse community of LGBTQ Southerners.



## **Liz Elsen**

*Director of Education & Training at The Center on Colfax*

Liz Elsen (they/she) serves as the Director of Education & Training at The Center on Colfax in Denver, Colorado and leads the agency's Range Consulting program. Liz has worked in IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity & accessibility) fields since 2007 and has a background in supporting LGBTQIA+ communities and training on issues of allyship, gender justice, intersectionality & bystander intervention. They graduated from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in drama & creative writing & they received a master's degree in higher education leadership & policy from the University of Texas at Austin. After graduating, Liz worked at The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as a Hall Director for the social-justice-themed Living & Learning Community, Intersections, and advised LGBTQIA+ and feminist organizations. They returned to UT Austin in 2012 to work at the Gender & Sexuality Center, where they held almost every role in the center until it closed in 2024 due to Texas' passing of SB 17, the "anti-DEI" bill. She is the recent recipient of the Accessibility Champion Award from the Disability Cultural Center, the Contributor of the Year award from Women's and Gender Studies at UT, and is on the board of the Texas Exes Pride Alumni Network. Liz is passionate about celebrating queer & trans joy and loves creating opportunities for this in their work & life. Liz is happy to chat about Steven Universe, bi-cons in pop culture, gender fluidity, and creating community. Liz enjoys helping people get organized, hanging out with their family & dogs (Clementine and Clover) and drinking a lot of coffee.



# Keynote Speaker: Savannah Geary

Lunch Plenary

Friday, October 18, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

*Doors open at 11:30 AM. Please find your seats by 12:00 PM.*

Savannah Geary (they/them) is an enthusiastic science communicator, producer, and independent content creator, combining a lifelong love of science and entertainment in their work. With a background in environmental science and a Master's degree in Environment, Culture, and Media from the University of Miami, Savannah's academic work has always focused on bridging the gap between environmental science and public understanding.



For Savannah, getting people interested in science is all about finding the right angle—whether it's stitching TikToks to add scientific context to viral moments or explaining climate change through the video game *Horizon: Zero Dawn*.

Savannah is a producer and host for SciShow, one of the best places to find science on the internet. SciShow has over 8 million subscribers on YouTube, 1 million followers on TikTok, and multiple Webby Awards. At SciShow, Savannah works with a team dedicated to making science both accessible and awe-inspiring. The channel explores everything from the weirdest corners of the natural world to the most groundbreaking scientific discoveries in videos posted five times a week. Savannah is a driving force behind SciShow's TikTok presence, where they helped pioneer the channel's take on the platform.

Beyond SciShow, Savannah creates their own content as an independent creator on both YouTube (as Savannah Geary) and TikTok (@yourlocallibrary), where they continue to explore the intersections of science, media, and storytelling. Their content is driven by a love of storytelling, blending science with pop culture and tapping into people's natural curiosity.



# Keynote Speaker: Kihana Wilson

Closing Plenary

Saturday, October 19, 4:00 PM - 5:15 PM

*Doors open at 4:00 PM. Please find your seats by 4:15 PM.*

Kihana (she/her) is an astrophysicist, science communicator, and content creator whose mission is to uplift, inspire, and encourage individuals of all backgrounds who are passionate about STEM, but especially those of marginalized identities. The fundamental tenet of her brand is “unapologetic representation,” which has become an integral practice in both her online and offline science communication and outreach work. She values authenticity, transparency, and community-building. She’s built a diverse online community of nearly 100,000 people across her social media platforms, and with her unfolding career in science, her storytelling background, and her passion for communicating science, she hopes to continue building and nurturing this community of scholars, scientists, and academic aspirants the world over.



Kihana earned her bachelor’s degree in Astrophysics from The University of Chicago in June 2024 as a QuestBridge and Odyssey scholar, where she also minored in English and Creative Writing. She is taking a gap year before pursuing her PhD, and in the meantime, is working as a post-baccalaureate researcher in the Cosmological Physics and Advanced Computing Group at Argonne National Laboratory, where she conducts research in cosmology theory and the early universe.

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 1

Thursday, 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM



## Etiquette, Expectations & Unspoken Rules of Being a STEM Professional

*Calum Ridyard and Raisa Glabman*

Are you looking to grow your confidence in professional settings? Are you worried you don't know what behaviour is expected at a formal dinner or networking event? Whether you're a current student or a recent STEM graduate, this workshop aims to support you as you get started in the world of work.

We understand that we have a diverse mixture of culture, backgrounds and experience. We will take you through expectations for new starters early in their career, as well as discussing both formal events and casual social settings. We will draw from some of our own experiences, plus we'll ask you to give examples and discuss scenarios throughout the session.

## Pamphlets, Zines, and All in Between: Advocacy through Written Material

*S. Monroe*

Whether it's increasing awareness through educational pamphlets, swapping survival strategies with legal guides, or making a platform for your creative voice in the zine scene—written materials are an incredible medium for advocacy and community building! This workshop focuses on written and print media in LGBTQ+ advocacy. You'll learn about the history of advocacy materials in the LGBTQ+ community, different formats for different audiences, how to make materials that meet a specific advocacy goal, and strategies for distributing your work. You'll also learn how skills from your advocacy projects are important in STEM fields and can strengthen your professional repertoire. Bring any example advocacy materials you have collected—or ones you've made yourself—to share with the room!

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.

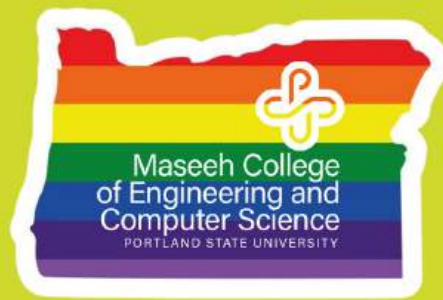


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# Workshop Block 1

## Thursday, 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM



### **Autism & Neurodivergence Working Session**

*Facilitator: Erin Bryant-Ross*

Join us as we share our experiences of finding accommodations at school and in the workplace, identify the means of access, and foster a space to talk about self-advocacy in a world not designed for brains like ours. We will also discuss ways in which oSTEM, its sponsors, and its partner organizations can best support neurodivergent people and provide pathways to success.

The Autism/Neurodivergence working session is a closed space for those in the autistic and neurodivergence communities to come together and empower one another while finding ways to improve our day-to-day lives.

### **Charging Up Equity: Community Benefits of Large-Scale Battery Energy Storage**

*Josephine Thomas*

Disadvantaged communities are more likely to face extreme weather conditions, power outages, and higher levels of pollution. By utilizing energy storage systems, more equitable communities can be built where no one group of people is more likely to face higher electricity costs or power instability. Energy storage systems are distinctly versatile and reliable as they can support wind and solar systems, the decommissioning of traditional power plants, or be stand-alone systems, and can function at any time of day under any weather condition. Energy storage integration would benefit communities that historically have been negatively impacted by traditional power generation systems. Come learn about the impact of large-scale battery storage on surrounding communities and how you can get involved!

*Content Warnings: homophobia, racism, sexism*

### **Improving Meeting Attendance: Recruitment and Retention**

*Will Gaston*

oSTEM at Oregon State University has cultivated an incredible space for LGBTQ+ students in STEM. Especially following our rapid growth this year, we'd like the opportunity to share our experiences so that other chapters can learn from our successes and challenges. Chapter leaders could employ some strategies from this workshop to grow their own regular attendance, building community and providing resources to more students. Our workshop would describe specific strategies in advertisement, outreach, collaboration, social and professional development meeting ideas, and other topics.

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# Workshop Block 2

## Thursday, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM



### **Bloom Where You Are Planted: Finding LGBTQ+ Community Post-Grad**

*Olivia Smithhisler*

On a college campus, there are endless opportunities to find friends, through classes, student groups, work, and volunteering. But after graduation, finding community can be challenging. You may find yourself in an unfamiliar city, far away from family and friends. Outside of work, there are no structured ways to meet and befriend people your age like there always have been in school. At work, LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in STEM fields, which makes it even harder to find community. The world is your oyster, but it's hard to determine what companies and cities have LGBTQ+ inclusive cultures. So how do you find your LGBTQ+ family post-grad? This session will focus on how to identify LGBTQ+ inclusive workplaces and locate LGBTQ+ STEM communities in your area. You will leave with strategies to courageously put yourself out there and build an LGBTQ+ support group wherever you land. Bloom where you are planted!

### **An Introduction to AI/ML Healthcare Solutions, Including the Ongoing Need for Bringing LGBTQ+ Communities Into the Fold**

*Eric Patridge*

Access to prime, effective healthcare is reserved for both the elite and "healthcare friends." In the future, health disparities are expected to increase, and benefits for the rich will frequently include specialized concierge services. One avenue to affordable and effective healthcare for everyone relies on both big data and AI/ML to rapidly elucidate health needs and deliver scalable healthcare solutions. This workshop will introduce a current example of AI/ML in molecular healthcare, with proactive solutions available when a person submits blood, saliva, and stool samples for analysis. The scientific aspects will focus on irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and other chronic diseases. Additional discussion will highlight ways to bring healthcare solutions to market using AI/ML, and the obvious concerns that underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+ populations, could be left behind without focused efforts for inclusion.

*Content Warnings: classism, death/dying, eating disorders, homophobia, mental illness, miscarriages, pregnancy, racism, substance abuse, transphobia*

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 2

## Thursday, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM



### Labor Unions and Labs: Solidarity and Organizing in Graduate School

*M Wittkop, Abby Ray, Jared Canright*

Graduate students are an incredibly important part of the universities they attend and work for, but are often treated as disposable, replaceable laborers. They make up a large part of the teaching staff in many departments - someone has to teach those labs and grade those papers - and drive cutting-edge research that brings in millions of dollars in grants. In late 2022, University of California graduate workers (along with other academic workers) went on strike, with 48,000 employees walking out for better pay and benefits. This kick started a wave of organizing across the country as coworkers became labor unions that have the legal right to bargain a fair contract. This panel will cover topics such as: organizing your peers; forming a union; recruiting to your union; different needs of research vs teaching workers; etc. This is not a discussion of rights and legality, especially as those differ geographically.

### Creating and Maintaining Community Relations as an oSTEM Chapter

*CJ Gilmore and Elizabeth Joyner*

Is your chapter hoping to engage community partners to inspire, share skills and wisdom, and provide opportunities to your members? If so, this session is for you. The goal of this session is to share a framework for interacting with potential and existing community partners (i.e., government, businesses, non-profits, etc.) and fostering meaningful relations that benefit both parties. Our chapter will discuss what these partnerships may look like. Then, we will use our newly-formed relationship with NASA as an example, and walk through how we fostered this relationship and what both parties gained from it. We will discuss what materials a chapter should consider to prepare and discuss how tasks from company partners can be delegated using committees to divide responsibilities. Participants will learn strategies for communicating and identifying these needs of their chapter; while also tips for setting clear and reasonable requests with partners.

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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“At Zebra, our LGBTQ+ employee resource group plays a key role in fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can achieve their full potential. My involvement has been deeply meaningful, giving me the confidence to express who I truly am. I believe that everyone should have the freedom to be themselves without hesitation, and Zebra has provided that space for me. Through this network, I’ve built strong, supportive relationships. It has had a lasting impact not just on me, but on how we, as a team, educate, support, and come together as a united community.”

— *Komal Arif, Talent Acquisition Partner, Zebra Technologies*



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# Workshop Block 2

## Thursday, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM



### Resumes, Nonprofits, and Government, Oh My!: Alternative Career Paths in STEM

*Brennan Kessenich*

STEM students learn an incredible amount, but how to apply to jobs is rarely included in the curriculum. Grad students especially may keep hearing about “transferable skills” without receiving guidance on how to demonstrate them on a resume. Campus career resources are also often limited to industry and academic tracks. This workshop aims to fill in these gaps by providing a crash-course on job applications, focused on nonprofit and government work. We will discuss how to decide if a job is worth applying to, elements of effective resumes, what happens to your application after submission, and navigating interviews. The workshop will include time for working on your resume and practicing answering interview questions. Attendees will leave with tools to produce excellent application packages for jobs that align with their personal values.

*Content Warnings: ableism, mental illness, transphobia*

### The Future of Exoplanet Research

*Ahnika Gee*

NASA has announced the new Habitable Worlds Observatory and the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope will be using a new method of exoplanet detection: direct imaging. We will discuss many of the main missions currently being used, including Kepler, TESS, and JWST, along with their methods of exoplanet detection. We will then discuss the future methods for missions like NGRST and HWO, along with how the missions will work and the future of exoplanetary sciences.

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 3

## Friday, 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM



### **The Value of Mentorship for Early Careerists**

*Vince Tripi*

Mentorship is an invaluable resource for early careerists. By seeking out a mentor, early careerists can gain the support and guidance they need to succeed in their careers. You can a powerful resource that can help you navigate you professional journey. Mentors can provide guidance, support, and advice, helping mentees to develop their skills, knowledge, and networks. They can also help mentees to set and achieve their goals, and to navigate the challenges of the workplace. This presentation will explore the benefits of mentorship, the qualities of a good mentor, and how to find and get the most out of a mentorship relationship.

### **Being They in Higher Education: An Exploration of Navigating Academic Spaces as Nonbinary**

*Gabs James, Glencora Borradaile, Eric Slyman*

Participants will engage in a conversation about embodying genderqueerness in a variety of ways and in different roles in university life. The plan would include featuring a professor, a graduate student, and a student support staff member who will explore barriers as well as successes in their experiences being out in STEM through rich dialogue. Using they/them pronouns continues to be a challenge for people raised in a binary world. Adding to that, STEM environments particularly compound the way we relate to one another with its frequent denial of social identities. This may be specifically valuable for those navigating these experiences themselves at research-intensive institutions, however, it will also be relatable for those navigating queer identities outside of higher education as well.

### **Race & Ethnicity Affinity Group**

*Facilitators: Ace Harris and AJ Bryant*

Join us for this year's Race & Ethnicity affinity group breakout session. This space aims to address the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in STEM fields. We strive to foster an environment that encourages open dialogue, mutual support, and shared learning around the intersection of race, queerness, and careers in STEM. In this breakout session, we will engage in meaningful discussions, share personal experiences, and explore strategies for navigating and succeeding in STEM as individuals of diverse races and ethnicities. This is a dedicated space for people who self-identify as members of this community.



# Workshop Block 3

## Friday, 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM



### **Being Transgender On a College Campus: Navigating Social and Power Dynamics In and Beyond STEM Disciplines**

*Harper Hall*

Navigating college is a challenge for those with minoritized gender identities. This is particularly true within STEM fields, which tend to be less inclusive. This workshop will share current research being done at Colorado State University focusing on the experiences of transgender students in public campus spaces. A divide has been noticed regarding how gender is negotiated in STEM versus non-STEM fields, which will be addressed. This workshop will also address the burden of implementing change that so often falls on queer resource centers and the fact that many students find themselves at odds with the communities and practices formed in those spaces. Participants will gain the knowledge and tools needed to instigate meaningful change at their schools and cultivate a sense of community. They will also learn to advocate for inclusive campus policies and practices that respect and uphold their diverse identities and experiences.

*Content Warnings: transphobia*

### **The Future of National Security: A Career Dive into the Intersection of Intelligence and STEM**

This session explores how innovations in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, data science, and various engineering disciplines are reshaping the field of intelligence and national defense. Attendees will gain insight into the challenges and opportunities within this space and learn about diverse career paths available at the convergence of STEM and national security. Whether a student or professional, this seminar will provide valuable perspectives on the roles that STEM disciplines play in safeguarding the nation.

Join us to discover how your unique skills and experiences can contribute to the future of national security.

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# Workshop Block 3

## Friday, 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM



### Leveraging Ansys Simulation for Sustainable Design and Career Advancement

*Gilles EggenSpieler, Palash Waghmare, Brittani Griffin*

In today's world, leading engineering companies are increasingly turning to Ansys simulation to enhance their sustainability efforts. By leveraging advanced simulation tools, these companies are developing products that not only maximize efficiency but also minimize their environmental impact. This presentation will delve into how Ansys simulation can drive professional growth for engineers while supporting sustainable design practices.

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### Queerly Disabled: Finding Power in Collective Creativity and Stories

*Xander Keller*

To bring visibility to the intersectional experience of those within the LGBTQIA+ community with chronic illness and disabilities. To share our lived experiences with these overlapping identities as they relate to our roles in STEM at Colorado State University. We want to presence the isolation in our community, which is often exacerbated in STEM fields, and introduce the power of sharing our experiences through creative expression. Our aim for this workshop is to plant seeds of collective empowerment and healing in community. Andrea Gibson says, "my pain about my pain is worse than my pain". We are interested in how we can be with the reality of our differences and release the shame of hiding. It's been our experience that this work, in community, can make space to allow us to feel joy and purpose amidst the pain. Inside of science specifically, creativity is often forgotten and overlooked, even though I experience innovation to be inextricable from creative processes. Reconnecting to our creativity can also enhance our ability to innovate and participate in science. \*can be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual pain

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



[bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda](https://bit.ly/oSTEM2024-Agenda)



# Workshop Block 3

Friday, 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM



## Navigating the Networking Nightmare: Skills for LGBTQ+ Professionals

*Sian Rankin-Turner*

As LGBTQ+ individuals, we know that engaging in professional spaces can sometimes feel like an uphill battle, navigating settings where disclosing your identity may not always feel safe or appropriate. In this workshop we will explore the complexities of networking as an LGBTQ+ person, focusing on equipping you with the tools, skills, and confidence needed to thrive. From icebreakers to elevator pitches, we'll cover it all, ensuring you're primed to make meaningful, authentic connections wherever you go. Through anecdotes, examples, discussions, and games, we'll explore how networking can serve as a catalyst for career progression, mentorship opportunities, and access to resources. We will put our new skills to the test with a round of Networking Bingo; a chance to practice, meet fellow attendees, and walk away with a boost of confidence and skills to ace the rest of the conference and beyond.

*Content Warnings: homophobia, transphobia*



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# Workshop Block 3

Friday, 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM



## Research Talks

Research talks were selected from the poster submissions and will be presented in Exhibit Hall A. To view the full abstract of these and other research talks, please view the abstract book presented on our website and in the Whova app.

*Robbie Leske*

**Structure and Optical Properties of CrCl<sub>3</sub> Thin Films**

*Tyler Corazao*

**Stimuli-Responsive Hydrogels for Engineered Living Materials**

*Debashrito Deb*

**Developing a chemoenzymatic toolbox for protein (semi)synthesis**

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### Scan to learn more.



Ashley G., She/Her  
Systems Support Engineer



Adam D., He/Him  
Director—Cloud  
PRISM ERG member



# Workshop Block 4

## Friday, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM



### **Let's Talk About Transitioning During Graduate School**

*Schuyler Melore and Tyler Corazao*

Grad school is stressful. Navigating a transition while pursuing a PhD is a daunting prospect. Often, there is no roadmap to follow due to a lack of trans graduate students and faculty. In this session, we will discuss topics such as coming out to your PI, taking time off for surgery, being stealth, how to support trans grad students, and other trans experiences as they relate to grad school. Our presenter will share his personal experiences with navigating these challenges, lessons learned in the process, and advice for those currently transitioning or considering it. We hope for this to be an interactive session and invite participants to share their own experiences and ask questions about the trans grad school experience during this discussion.

*Content Warnings: transphobia*

### **Women's Affinity Group**

*Facilitator: Raisa Glabman*

Join us for this year's women affinity group breakout session. This gathering is dedicated to empowering and supporting women and femme-aligned folks in the STEM community. Our session aims to address the unique experiences and challenges faced by women in STEM fields. In this breakout session, we will engage in meaningful discussions, share personal experiences, and explore strategies for navigating and succeeding in STEM as women.



# Workshop Block 4

## Friday, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM



### How Engineers Helped Decriminalize Homosexuality in India

*Vardhman Kumar*

While LGBTQIA+ individuals in many developed countries grapple with ensuring that their hard-won rights—such as marriage equality, and adoption rights—are respected and not rolled back, the situation in much of the developing world is starkly different. In many developing countries, LGBTQIA+ people are still criminalized, facing severe punishments. India, where homosexuality was illegal due to a colonial-era law introduced during British rule, was no exception. This law, imposed in multiple British colonies, has adversely affected and continues to impact a significant proportion of LGBTQIA+ people globally. In India, the decades-long legal battle to overturn this law faced significant resistance and repeated failures. Unwilling to spend our lives as criminals, a group of us decided to approach the highest court and ensure our voices were heard.

We shared how we had to navigate our careers while living under the constant threat of persecution. Our STEM education and careers played a crucial role in this legal battle. The group of petitioners comprised students and alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology, India's premier technical institute. Our legal arguments centered on how, despite receiving the best education, we were unable to reach our full potential due to this law. This not only affected our personal and professional lives but also deprived the country of valuable talent. Finally, in a historic judgment, the Supreme Court of India decriminalized homosexuality, marking a monumental victory for the community. This journey taught us the profound power of telling our stories. By coming forward and speaking our truths, we were able to effect significant change and secure rights for millions. Our story serves as a testament to the transformative power of education, solidarity, and perseverance in the pursuit of equality and justice.

*Content Warnings: homophobia, mental abuse, physical abuse, self-harm, sexual assault, suicide, transphobia*

### Faculty & Staff Advisor Meet Up

Faculty and staff advisors and higher education administrators are invited to connect and discuss success and challenges related to supporting active and emerging oSTEM collegiate chapters.

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 4

Friday, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM



## Own Your Journey: Exploring FBI STEM Careers and Inclusive Networking Strategies

*Krystie Ocasio*

This session is invaluable to the LGBTQIA+ STEM community as it addresses the intersection of queer identities and STEM careers within the FBI. It offers a unique opportunity to explore how LGBTQIA+ ERGs create inclusive spaces that enhance career development, foster community, and support the well-being of LGBTQIA+ employees. By highlighting the impactful careers of STEM professionals and sharing insights from FBI ERG members, the workshop provides insightful guidance for LGBTQIA+ individuals pursuing careers in STEM fields, particularly within federal agencies like the FBI.

This program blends diversity and inclusion discussions with the real-world impact of FBI STEM careers, offering a comprehensive view of how queer professionals can thrive in a high-stakes environment.



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# Workshop Block 4

## Friday, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM



### Queering Climate Tech Spaces

*Christine Mak*

As a 4 year old startup that has centered DEIB in hiring, culture build, retention, and employee support, Heirloom has excelled on implementing some key best practices in recruiting and hiring LGBTQ+ talent, as well as providing employee support through our LGBTQ+ ERG. This session will have two parts: (1) narrative presentation of lessons learned and successes obtained in hiring queer and trans staff and ERG creation, and (2) an activity-based reflection for attendees to walk away with more insight on what they will look for in their next job search and/or what they can do to improve hiring and ERG support at their current institution. All stages of educational and career paths are welcome to this session!

### Research Talks

*Research talks were selected from the poster submissions and will be presented in Exhibit Hall A. To view the full abstract of these and other research talks, please view the abstract book presented on our website and in the Whova app.*

*Sabena Siddiqui*

**Same-sex behavior in cetaceans: an interdisciplinary approach**

*Dendron Chamberlain*

**Effects of Testosterone Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) on the Cervicovaginal Tract During the Titration Phase of Treatment**

*Rachel Adams*

**Developing a fine-tuned gene therapy for SLC6A1-related neurodevelopmental disorder**

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 5

## Friday, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM



### **DRAG - Destroying Rules About Gender (& Identity)**

*Sara Riyad*

Join me as I navigate my journey as an intersex POC drag king/thing and lesbian at a PWI. Coming from an incredibly diverse hometown, I found myself in a culture shock--entering an environment lacking in fostering and celebrating varied identities. This session will share my experiences in advocating for greater inclusivity and recognition of diverse identities within the collegiate community. Through personal stories and reflective insights, I will discuss the importance of creating environments that honor and uplift marginalized voices. We will explore practical strategies for promoting diversity, emphasizing self-reflection on our own identities and privileges. We will look within to create spaces that both empower and learn. Together, we can transform spaces to be more inclusive and celebratory of all identities.

*Content Warnings: racism, transphobia*

### **Staying True to Yourself: Leveraging Your Identity to Get the Job!**

*Peter Myers and Elizabeth Eikmann*

Whether “out” for a day or for a decade, fear of discrimination can make the academic job search process feel like coming out of the closet all over again. So how can you be your authentic self while maximizing your chances of both getting an interview and landing the job? Peter Myers, PhD and Elizabeth Eikmann, PhD will share their own experiences with navigating academic job searches and guide participants through a set of activities where participants will practice viewing their queer identities through a competitive advantage lens. Attendees will learn to scan job ads for key words and concepts to leverage in job materials and interviews, highlighting the skills and diverse perspectives they add to any workplace. Participants will leave with new perspectives and unique tools to leverage their experiences and expertise so that when they hear “You’re hired” they know their whole self is being valued.





# Workshop Block 5

Friday, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM



## Examining Systems of Privilege and Marginalization - The Intersection of LGBTQIA+ and Racial Identities in DEI/STEM Initiatives

*Jenna Tashiro*

DEI/STEM initiatives often address a single dimension of identity, for example either LGBTQIA+ identity or race/ethnicity. Focus on “all” scholars within a singular community often center those with more privilege, rather than those with other marginalized identities, such as LGBTQIA+ scholars of color. Using Crenshaw’s intersectionality framework, our study evaluates a conference for racially/ethnically marginalized STEM graduate students. Through a mixed methods design, we explore the reactions of STEM scholars of color who identified as LGBTQIA+, LGBTQIA+ allies, LGBTQIA+ non-allies, and conference organizers to a talk from a gay presenter. Findings reveal how DEI/STEM efforts can uphold systems of privilege and marginalize those with intersectional identities. By deconstructing how privilege operates within these systems, we aim to empower participants to create spaces in STEM where everyone can show up as their whole and authentic selves.

*Content Warnings: hateful against religious groups, racism, sexism*

## Putting the L in LGBTQ History

*Terese Farnen, Chelsea Wise, Donna Aaron, Rachael Kondrat*

Have times really changed for lesbians in the workplace? Hear from a panel consisting of four generations of lesbians and their experiences starting and emerging in the workplace. Learn from the trailblazers of the past and those of the future. Micron will facilitate an engaging, funny and fascinating panel of different generations of lesbians who have been out in the workplace throughout their careers. Each lesbian will have a chance to explore and examine how they handled some fairly commonplace scenarios and learn how the sisters of the past handled the situations vs the new challenges faced by the Gen Z panelist in emerging in the workplace. Did these women have the same experiences even 40 years apart? What similarities do they have in common? How can we learn from each other and understand our own history in such a unique context.

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# Workshop Block 5

## Friday, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM



### **Middle Sexualities Affinity Group**

*Facilitators: Erin Bryant-Ross and Abby Ray*

This gathering is a dedicated space for individuals who identify with sexualities that don't necessarily fit into the traditional gay, lesbian, or straight boxes. Our session is open to all who identify as bi, pan, poly, queer, asexual, aromantic, or any other identity that falls under the umbrella of middle sexualities. In this breakout session, we will engage in open discussions, share personal experiences, and explore the unique challenges and opportunities associated with identifying as a middle sexuality in the STEM fields. We will also provide resources and strategies tailored to our community's needs and interests.

### **Career Opportunities Under the NOAA Umbrella**

*Luis Ingram-Westover*

Unlock secrets in the deep ocean, track rapidly moving storms, operate state-of-the-art environmental satellites, chart the Nation's waterways, formulate models to forecast climate trends, protect and preserve our living marine resources. It's all in a day's work at NOAA! Join a dedicated workforce committed to a vital mission: safeguarding the public, protecting natural resources, strengthening the economy. NOAA, a career that makes a world of difference!

Join us for a talk on various career opportunities at NOAA!

### **LGBTQ+ in Government**

*Charlie Carrasco*

The session will be facilitated by Charlie Carrasco from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Justice and Equity, serving as the Senior Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Specialist and White House Initiatives Advisor on advancing equity. Charlie will navigate the session to provide the following take-aways of value to individuals seeking to serve within the federal government: benefits to being a federal employee, opportunities within STEM related fields that are on the cutting-edge of energy transformation, learn from LGBTQ+ employees about their experiences and strategies to navigate the workplace.

*Content Warnings: workplace harassment*

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 5

Friday, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM



## Research Talks

Research talks were selected from the poster submissions and will be presented in Exhibit Hall A. To view the full abstract of these and other research talks, please view the abstract book presented on our website and in the Whova app.

*Phuong Vo*

**Identification and characterization of soluble TLR4 (sTLR4) as a new player in mucosal immunity**

*Nolawit Mulugeta*

**High dimensional Phenotyping of Peripheral T Regulatory Cells Across Gestation**

*Emily Beckett*

**Small-Molecule Induced Stress Granule Formation in Neurodegenerative Disease Pathology**

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# Workshop Block 6

## Saturday, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM



### **Building & Prioritizing Financial Wealth During Your Career**

*River Nice*

You've worked hard to make money. You're spending a third of your waking life working for your money. But are you using that money to get what you want out of life? This workshop is designed to teach you how to: 1) figure out what you want out of life, 2) set specific, actionable goals, and 3) use your income to achieve those goals.

### **Creative Queeriosity: Intro to Art Therapy for STEM Minds**

*Terra Lee and Liyu Huang*

oSTEM at Vanderbilt will host an art therapy workshop to aid self-exploration and self-expression as LGBTQIA+ students. As students, classwork, extracurriculars, social life, and career goals can often cause chronic stress, leading to physical and mental harm. We want everyone to use this art therapy workshop as a moment to relax. We understand that all students from many different walks of life are attending this conference and hope that this can provide them with an opportunity to express themselves, destress, and take home a new art piece for their living spaces that remind them of their free artistic expression!

*Content Warnings: mental illness*

### **Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Researchers: Benefits, Bioethics, and Strategies for Representation and Inclusion in Academia**

*Dendron Chamberlain*

As research on the dramatically understudied health of transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse (TNGD) individuals begins to receive funding, it is vital that we move the field forward in an ethical manner. What are the benefits and ethics of including TNGD researchers on academic research teams? What does that look like at an individual lab's scale or at a national/international scale? What are some actionable items that both cisgender allies and TNGD researchers can use to effectively move academia towards the safety and comfort we wish academia had for TNGD researchers? This workshop addresses all of these questions head on with data and real life examples.

*Content Warnings: transphobia, diagrams of human reproductive organs, use of anatomical terminology for reproductive body parts*





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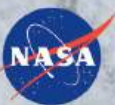
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EPA proudly supports oSTEM's vision of nurturing advocacy and empowering LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM to succeed in a safe and supportive environment.

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# Workshop Block 6

Saturday, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM



## Filling the Gap As A Community: Critical Knowledge Deficits in Transgender Health Research and How We Can Address Them

*Kristina Tang*

There are knowledge gaps in basic biology and clinical research for transgender individuals. This workshop will aim to build a community of scholars interested in studying molecular and clinical transgender health through lecture and discussion. The workshop will review the known molecular functions of steroidal sex hormones and their effects on health. It will then review the current literature on gender affirming hormone therapy before discussing basic biology knowledge gaps in transgender health. The following part of the workshop will highlight the lack of clinical research and consequently, the lack of medical treatment guidelines specific to transgender individuals undergoing gender affirming hormone therapy. The last part of the workshop will review research techniques, and clinical study designs that could answer these knowledge gaps. After reviewing this information, the workshop will open for discussion and networking on potential research designs and collaborations that can push this type of research into reality.

*Content Warnings: transphobia*

## Queer Enabled Affinity Group

*Facilitators: Erin Bryant-Ross and Nova Moore*

Join us for an engaging and empowering session with the oSTEM Queer Enabled Affinity Group. This breakout session is designed to provide a supportive space for LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM who identify as disabled, neurodivergent, or chronically ill. Our goal is to foster an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity in all its forms. We aim to address the unique challenges faced by our community members, share experiences, and discuss strategies for personal and professional success.

## NASA: Finding Your Flight Path

*Steven Holz, Michele Beisler, Joel Scott, Christi Punteny, and Veebs Panchal*

All of our life and career journeys are different. No matter what your major is or where in your career journey you are, come engage with queer folk from NASA working exploring the unknown in air and space, innovating for the benefit of All. This interactive panel will dive into the personal and career journeys, inspirations, and goals of the panelists, while giving the audience a chance to drive the conversation.



# Workshop Block 6

## Saturday, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM



### **You Chip, We Chip: A Step Inside Semiconductor Manufacturing**

*Landon Loeber*

Discover the fascinating world of semiconductor chips! We will demystify the technology that powers everything from smartphones to satellites. Through hands-on activity and discussions, participants will explore how chips are designed, manufactured, and integrated into everyday devices. It's a unique opportunity to understand the critical role of semiconductors in modern technology and to ignite a passion for innovation in the next generation of engineers. Join us for an engaging session that bridges theory with practical insight into the building blocks of our digital world.

### **Let's Weave a Tale as Olde as Time: Write Your Statement of Purpose**

*Abreeotta Williams-Jones*

LGBTQ+ identifying students are often ignored in STEM diversity recruitment initiatives. Thus, students do not always receive the application assistance services needed. The Research Statement is often the most difficult portion of the graduate school application. This coupled with other factors leads to an underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ students in STEM fields. This work seeks to aid in remedying this ill. Students will get helpful hints and tips on writing their essay. They will start writing with the help of a prescribed outline.



# Workshop Block 6

Saturday, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM



## You're Too Old / Young to Understand...the Importance of Cross-Generational Connections in the Workplace

*Paul Turczynski and Olivia Quiroga*

Have you ever thought about how events, trends and historical incidents may have shaped your mindset as an LGBTQ+ person, and, more generally, the attitudes of members of yours' and others' generations? This workshop will define generations and examine significant moments in time that shaped LGBTQ+ lives: from the "Lavender Scare" to Lady Gaga. Join an industry insider with 22 years of management experience ("old") and a 22-year-old college student ("young") as they share the events that shaped their own self-perceptions and the attitudes of the generational cohorts with which they interact. This workshop focuses on how to improve and promote communication and connection between and amongst members of different identities and generations. Numerous activities including an "assumption audit" provide personal insight into potential hidden biases that block communication. The goal is to provide tools to bridge generational gaps and strengthen existing and future connections in the workplace.

## Research Talks

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*Abigail Spray*

**Characterizing immune responses to *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection in the cervix and rectum of non-human primates by high-parameter full spectrum flow cytometry**

*Reed Brzezinski*

**Antimicrobial Resistance and Fecal Microbiota Transplantation**

*Brianna Hurysz*

**Uncovering the dynamics of proteolytic activity in human milk**

For the most up to date schedule, including locations, please visit the agenda in Whova.



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# Workshop Block 7

## Saturday, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM



### **Creating Engineered Soil Microcosms With 3D Printing**

*Beck Walton*

Silica glass possesses high transparency and is biologically inert and can thus be used in bioreactors and sensors. Coupling the versatility of silica glass with the geometric capabilities of different projection-based 3D printing methods facilitates novel designs in both optics and biology. In soil science studies methods to create a porous, inorganic substrate for microbes could begin to de-convolute the complex ecology of soil. A substrate that also has the capability to be transparent under certain conditions would additionally allow for 3D analysis of microbe growth via confocal microscopy. By submerging 3D printed lattice structures channels can be introduced to mimic natural structures such as roots, while particle packing porosity can be controlled with small sacrificial particles mixed with the glass particles. The resulting soil surrogate is unreactive with microbes and can also be infiltrated with an index matched fluid post-microbe growth to facilitate full confocal microscopy of the sample.

### **Being a Voice for Policy Change in Your Local Community**

*William Harley*

Local government need leaders with STEM training as they increasingly face challenges from new tools (such as artificial intelligence), try to address issues such as climate resilience, and election security. There is often a gap between policymakers, who understand the unique needs of their communities, and STEM professionals, who are not trained in how to effectively support local decision makers. Local policymaking processes are dominated by advocates who may not represent a diverse array of community perspectives, including young, LGBTQ+, or STEM voices. This workshop will provide real case studies and step-by-step resources to engage local policymakers in the lead up to the election season and beyond. Attendees will participate in a hands-on activity from Engineers & Scientists Acting Locally, allowing them to leave with tailored resources and next steps to effectively take the next step in their local engagement journey.

### **Trans & Nonbinary Affinity Group**

*Facilitators: AJ Bryant, Erin Bryant-Ross, and Ace Harris*

This affinity group session is for those who are trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or intersex, as well as anybody who is questioning their gender identity. It offers a safer space to meet others with shared identities and experiences, to ask and answer questions, to celebrate our achievements, to build a supportive network, and to advocate for greater visibility.



# Workshop Block 7

## Saturday, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM



### **Employee Resource Group Engagement in Manufacturing**

*Olivia Smithhisler*

Consistent and effective employee engagement in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) can be an enormous challenge, and manufacturing companies face the extra challenge of working across multiple shifts, worksites, and time zones. A third shift union employee has different needs than first shift engineer. Small satellite offices experience a very different company culture than a large factory on the other side of the country. How do you successfully engage all employees at a manufacturing facility in ERGs? The presenter will share tips based on several years of experience forming and leading a new LGBTQ+ ERG at the Kansas City National Security Campus (KCNSC). The discussions will help brainstorm ideas and lessons learned to improve ERG engagement.

### **Rockwell Automation & Creating the Future of Industrial Operations**

*Therese Klein*

Learn about the factory of the future and how it is transforming from automation to autonomous technology. Enabled by Industrial AI, Edge and Cloud information solutions, smart machines, intelligent conveyors, and autonomous logistics make production operations more efficient, predictable, and resilient.

Rockwell Automation is a global leader in industrial automation and digital transformation. We connect the imaginations of people with the potential of technology to expand what is humanly possible, making the world more productive and more sustainable.

### **Chip Camp: A Step Inside Semiconductor Manufacturing**

*Chelsea Wise*

Discover the fascinating world of semiconductor chips in our Chip Camp for college students. This workshop demystifies the technology that powers everything from AI to smartphones to satellites. Through hands-on activity and discussions, participants will explore how chips are designed, manufactured, and integrated into everyday devices. It's a unique opportunity to understand the critical role of semiconductors in modern technology and to ignite a passion for innovation in the next generation of engineers. Join us for an engaging session that bridges theory with practical insight into the building blocks of our digital world.



# Workshop Block 7

Saturday, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM



## Successful Careers Start With the Right Resources with Naval Nuclear Laboratory

*Ainsley Pinkowitz and Sinter Russell*

The Naval Nuclear Laboratory is the U.S. Navy's trusted partner for superior propulsion technology, design, testing, training, and support. Members of the Naval Nuclear Laboratory's LGBTQ+ employee resource group and talent ambassador team will present on building a successful career with the resources the Naval Nuclear Laboratory has available to all employees. The talk will include an info session and presentation "Insurance and Gender Affirming Care at Naval Nuclear Laboratory".

## Research Talks

*Research talks were selected from the poster submissions and will be presented in Exhibit Hall A. To view the full abstract of these and other research talks, please view the abstract book presented on our website and in the Whova app.*

*Nicole Chlebek*

### **Understanding the Experiences of Indigenous Mayan Undergraduate Students as Emerging Researchers in Quintana Roo, Mexico**

*Daisy Haas*

### **Exploring the Experiences of Chemistry GTAs with Pedagogical Commitments for Equity Across Anti-DEI Contexts**

*Charlie McManus*

### **Improving the Experience of Trans Computer Science Majors Through Better Data Collection and Implementation**

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