

Student Honors & Awards: Undergraduate

TOP RIGHT: 2025 Alan H. Barrett Prize
winner Donald (DJ) Liveoak.
Credit: Justin Knight Photography

BOTTOM RIGHT: 2025 Morse/Orloff
Award for Research winner
Samuel (Sam) Christian. Credit:
Justin Knight Photography

2025 Alan H. Barrett Prize

The prize honors the late Professor Alan H. Barrett's outstanding influence in the education of physicists and his fundamental contribution to the science and technology of astrophysics. One thousand dollars is awarded to a graduate or undergraduate student with outstanding research in astrophysics.

Donald (DJ) Liveoak SB '25

Academic Advisor: Mark Vogelsberger

The 2025 Morse/Orloff Award for Research

Given in memory of the late MIT Professor of Physics Philip Morse, one of the renowned physicists of the twentieth century, whose contributions spanned basic physics to engineering. Funds are generously provided by Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Orloff in memory of their son Joel, a Physics major, who died in an automobile accident shortly after graduation from MIT in 1978. One thousand dollars is awarded to one or more senior students of high academic standing who plan to pursue graduate studies in physics.

Samuel (Sam) Christian SB '25

Academic Advisor: Janet Conrad



2025 Burchard Scholars

The Burchard Scholars Program brings together distinguished members of the faculty and promising sophomores and juniors who have demonstrated excellence in some aspect of the humanities, arts, and social sciences, as well as in science and engineering. The program is sponsored by the Dean's Office, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.

Abhay Bestrapalli '26

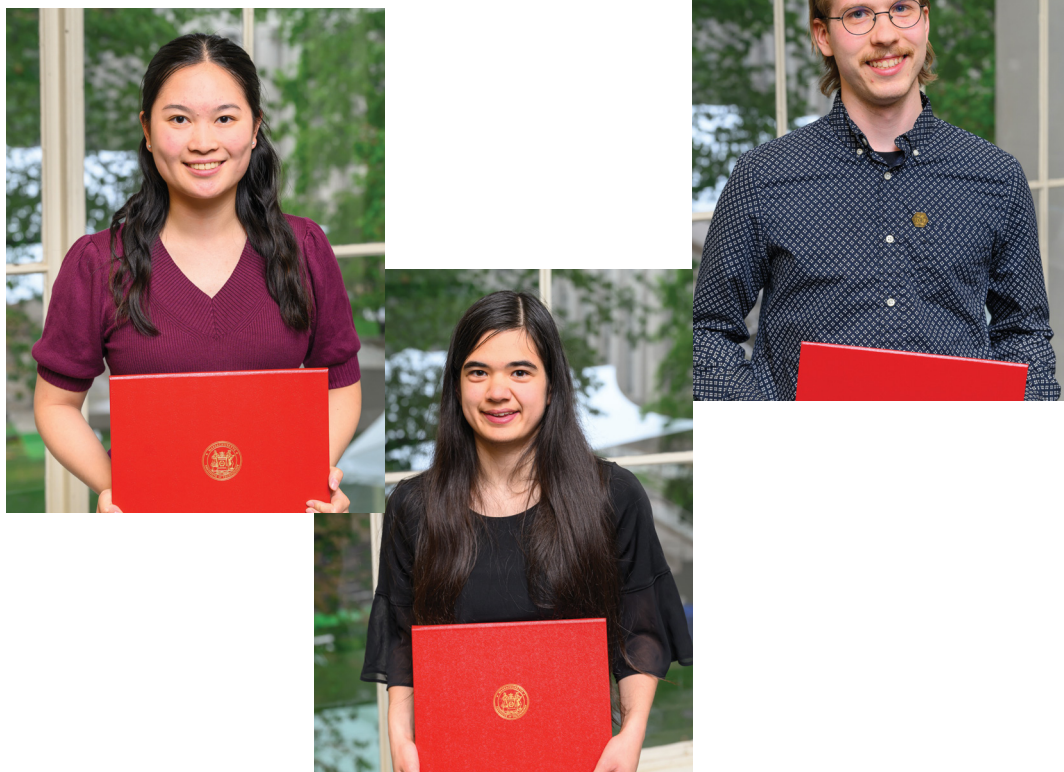
Yongao Hu '26

Layna Oberg '27

Jiwoo Park '26

Kartik Pingle '26

Braedon Rudolph '26



The 2025 Joel Matthew Orloff Awards

Established by Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Orloff in memory of their son Joel, a Physics major, who died in an automobile accident shortly after graduation from MIT in 1978. One thousand dollars is awarded to each winner.

SERVICE

Given to the student(s) with the most outstanding service to the Department, Institute, or community.

Karen Lei SB '25

Academic Advisor: Joseph Checkelsky

SCHOLARSHIP

Given to the student(s) with outstanding scholastic achievement in physics.

Kayla O'Donnell SB '25

Academic Advisor: Lindley Winslow

ABOVE LEFT: 2025 Joel Matthew Orloff Award for Service winner Karen Lei. Credit: Justin Knight Photography

ABOVE MIDDLE: 2025 Joel Matthew Orloff Award for Scholarship winner Kayla O'Donnell. Credit: Justin Knight Photography

ABOVE RIGHT: 2025 Order of the Lepton Award winner Antti Eero Asikainen. Credit: Justin Knight Photography

The 2025 Order of the Lepton Award

Awarded to a graduating senior who best exemplifies the spirit and characteristics of MIT's Physics students. Established with gifts from alumni and friends of the Department, the Order of the Lepton embodies the community spirit and collaboration that are hallmarks of the MIT Physics Department. The fund provides a prize of \$1,000.

Antti Eero Asikainen SB '25

Academic advisor: Krishna Rajagopal



2025 Sigma Pi Sigma Inductees

Election to Sigma Pi Sigma is based upon a student's strong academic record. With over 90,000 members throughout its history, its purpose is to be of service to the broader physics community. It encourages scholarship in physics by admitting a student to the fellowship of others with similar interests and accomplishments. This year, MIT's Physics Department inducts 24 new members.

Antti Eero Asikainen	Benjamin (Ben) Lou
Saul Balcarcel-Salazar	Jovan Markovic
Jorian Benke	Quan Nguyen
Eddie Chen	Kayla O'Donnell
Samuel (Sam) Christian	Anna Orgel
Ezekiel Daye	Tomasz Slusarczyk
Garrett Heller	Max Tan
Dobrica Jovanovic	Cristopher Tong
Alice Le	Vetri Vel
Karen Lei	Amir White
Zhening Li	Eleanor Winkler
Donald (DJ) Liveoak	Leo Yao



2025 Phi Beta Kappa Inductees

Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest honor society in the United States of America. Less than 10% of the graduating class is invited, and selection is based upon academic record, dedication to the liberal arts, and language skills. This year, MIT's Chapter (Xi) of Phi Beta Kappa voted to invite 19 physics majors to membership in the Society.

Antti Eero Asikainen	Jovan Markovic
Eddie Chen	Kayla O'Donnell
Samuel (Sam) Christian	Anna Orgel
David Dai	Lawrence Shi
Ezekiel Daye	Tomasz Slusarczyk
Dobrica Jovanovic	Max Tan
Alice Le	Christopher Tong
Karen Lei	Vetri Vel
Donald (DJ) Liveoak	Leo Yao
Benjamin (Ben) Lou	

ABOVE: 2025 Sigma Pi Sigma Inductees. Credit: Justin Knight Photography

RIGHT: 2025 Phi Beta Kappa Inductees. Credit: Justin Knight Photography



2024–2025 Buechner Undergraduate Advising Award

Ronald F. Garcia Ruiz

Thomas A. Frank Career Development
Associate Professor of Physics

Other Undergraduate Awards & Honors

Ezekiel Daye (SB '25, *Physics & Electrical Engineering*. Academic advisors: Liang Fu, Luqiao Liu) was inducted into the electrical and computer engineering honor society, Eta Kappa Nu, in recognition of academic excellence and leadership potential within the EECS department; received the Everett Longstreth Jazz Award for “distinguished service and musical contributions to the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble”; and received the Laya and Jerome B. Wiesner Student Art Award for “outstanding contributions to the arts at MIT, recognizing leadership and long-term impact within the artistic community, particularly through music and performance.”

Taisiia Karasova (SB '26. Academic advisor: Julien TAILLEUR) received a Rai Weiss Undergraduate Travel Award for her project: “Statistical Modeling of Gravitational Wave Sources Using Cosmological simulations: Cross-Correlations with Galaxy Catalogs for Cosmological Inference.” The award provides up to \$2,000 for 2025 summer travel.

Alice Trang Le (SB '25. Academic advisor: Soonwon Choi) was awarded First Prize in the Karmel Writing Prize Competition, Robert A. Boit Essay category; and Second Prize in the Karmel Writing Prize Competition, Rebecca Blevins Faery Autobiographical Essay category.

Benjamin Lou (SB '25. Academic/Research advisors: Janet Conrad, Nergis Mavalvala) received the 2025 Hertz Fellowship for support of “bold, high-impact scientific research”; and was awarded a 2025 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, which will provide three years of financial support, including an annual stipend of \$37,000.

Isabella Vesely (SB '27. Academic advisor: Yen-Jie Lee) received the 2025 Jeffrey L. Pressman Award, for research or internship in U.S. government, politics, or law.

Felicia Xiao (SB '26. Academic advisor: Tracy Slatyer) received a Rai Weiss Undergraduate Travel Award for her project: “Investigating zero bias cosmic voids as standard cosmological rulers.” The award provides up to \$2,000 for 2025 summer travel.

Student Honors & Awards: Graduate

The Department's graduate awards winners for the 2023-2024 academic year (listed below) were publicly announced at an on-campus event in September 2024. A listing of all prizes and winners for 2024-2025 will appear in the Fall 2026 issue of *physics@mit*.

2023-2024 Martin Deutsch Student Award for Excellence in Experimental Physics

Created in 1987 in honor of Professor Martin Deutsch's outstanding career as an experimentalist and for his influence as an educator. One thousand dollars is awarded annually to one or more graduate students mid-way through thesis research in any field, with preference for an experimentalist.

Hudson Loughlin

Atomic Physics

Thesis supervisors: Matthew Evans;
Nergis Mavalvala

2023-2024 Andrew M. Lockett III Memorial Fund Award

Awarded to a graduate student in theoretical physics, with preference given to students from Los Alamos, NM, and New Orleans, LA. The award currently carries a prize of \$1,000. The award was established by Mrs. Lucille Lockett Stone in memory of her husband, Dr. Andrew M. Lockett, who received his PhD in physics from MIT in 1954.

Yugo Onishi

Condensed Matter Theory

Thesis supervisor: Liang Fu

Other Graduate Honors & Awards

Zhaoyi Li (Center for Ultracold Atoms. Thesis supervisor: Isaac Chuang) received the Best Student Paper Prize at the 2025 Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication, and Cryptography conference for her work on quantum purity amplification.

Hudson Loughlin (Atomic Physics. Thesis supervisors: Nergis Mavalvala, Matthew Evans) received an Enrico Fermi Fellowship from the John Templeton Foundation and the Center for SpaceTime and the Quantum; and was awarded a Draper Scholars Fellowship.

Hyo Sun Park (Atomic Physics. Thesis supervisor: Wolfgang Ketterle) received the 2025 Ragnar & Margaret Naess Award from the MIT Music and Theater Arts Section in recognition of “exceptional talent and commitment to performance at MIT.”

Sahaj Patel (Condensed Matter Experiment. Thesis supervisor: Riccardo Comin) received an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, which will provide three years of financial support, including an annual stipend of \$37,000.

Stella Schindler (Center for Theoretical Physics. Thesis supervisor: Iain Stewart) received the 2025 J. J. and Noriko Sakurai Dissertation Award in Theoretical Particle Physics from the American Physical Society.

Graduate Degree Recipients 2024-25

SEPTEMBER 2024

Alexander Yu Chuang PhD
Margarita Davydova PhD
Batyrl Ilyas PhD
Wenxuan Jia PhD
Robert Jones PhD
Honggeun Kim PhD
Ouail Kitouni PhD
Evgenii Kniazev PhD
Jeffrey Krupa PhD
Daniel Mayer PhD
Tri Nguyen PhD
Patrick Oare PhD
Connor Occhialini PhD
Olumakinde Ogunnakie PhD
Kalirae Mabelle Pappas PhD
Changnan Peng PhD
Bruna Sebastian Scheihing
Hitschfeld PhD
Stella Tallulah Schindler PhD

Yifan Su PhD
Silviu-Marian Udrescu PhD
Tianyu Justin Yang PhD
Ming Zheng PhD

FEBRUARY 2025

Mikail Khona PhD
Jackson Pybus PhD
Tim Johnson PhD
Blox Bloxham PhD
Jacob Percy PhD
David Rower PhD

MAY/JUNE 2025

Molly Park PhD
Enrique Toloza PhD
Ben Stein-Lubrano PhD
Andrea Perry SM
Andrew Denniston PhD
Rahul Jayaramen PhD

Eunice Lee PhD
John Martyn PhD
Oriol Rubies Bigorda PhD
Paul Neves PhD
Rikab Gambhir PhD
Daniel Swartz PhD
Jinggang Xiang PhD
Samuel Alipour-fard PhD
Pin-Chun Chou SM
Nicholas Demos PhD
Ali Ghorashi PhD
Beili Hu PhD
Gianni LeVecchia PhD
Yukun Lu PhD
Geoffrey Mo PhD
Xiaowei Ou PhD
Zhengyan Shi PhD
Kaitlyn Shin PhD
Joshua Wakefield PhD
Jacob Willis SM
Zhiren Zheng PhD