

# Student Honors & Awards: Undergraduate



**ABOVE:**  
2024 Alan H.  
Barrett Prize winner  
April Cheng.

## 2024 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.

**April Cheng SB '24**

**Academic advisor:** Michael McDonald

## 2024 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.

**Saul Balcarcel-Salazar SB '25**

**Alice Le SB '25**

**Felicia Xiao SB '25**

## The 2024 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.

**Owen Dugan SB '24**

**Academic advisor/Research supervisor:**  
Marin Soljačić

## The 2024 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.

### Xinyi (Hope) Fu SB '24

**Academic advisor:** Anna Frebel

### SCHOLARSHIP

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

### Clara Xu SB '24

**Academic advisor:** Anna Frebel



**ABOVE:** 2024 Joel Matthew Orloff Award for Service winner Xinyi (Hope) Fu.



**ABOVE:** 2024 Joel Matthew Orloff Award for Scholarship winner Clara Xu.



## The 2024 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.

### Chirag Falor SB '24

**LEFT:** 2024 Order of the Lepton Award winner Chirag Falor.

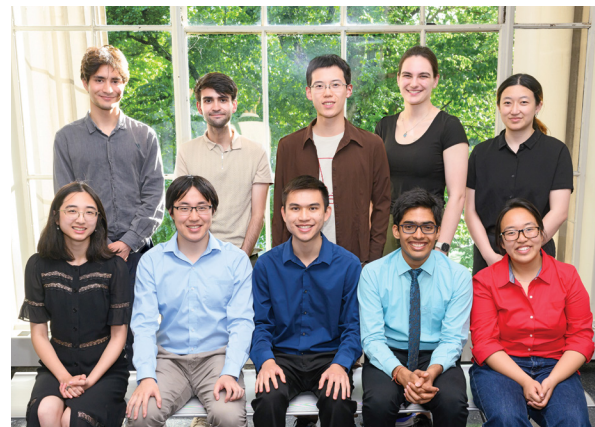


## 2024 Sigma Pi Sigma Inductees

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.

**Berkin Binbas**  
**Penny Brant**  
**Allison Brattley**  
**Sean Chen**  
**April Cheng**  
**Jessica Cohen**  
**Owen Dugan**  
**Chirag Falor**  
**Hope Fu**  
**Subhash Kantamneni**  
**William Li**  
**Joseph McCarty**  
**Ryan McTigue**  
**Riley Moeykens**  
**Linh Nguyen**  
**Panupong Phoompuang**

**Albert Qin**  
**Achilleus Savvidis**  
**Eric Sun**  
**Nicolas Tanaka**  
**Max Tao**  
**Chris Viets**  
**Jessica Wang**  
**Clara Xu**



## 2024 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 **127** members of the Class of 2024, **15** of whom are physics majors, to membership in the Society.

**Allison Brattley**  
**Seoyeon (Chloe) Choi**  
**Jade Chongsathapompong**  
**Jessica Cohen**  
**Owen Dugan**  
**Chirag Falor**  
**Hope Fu**  
**William Li**

**Erick Padilla**  
**Albert Qin**  
**Maya Redden**  
**Achilleus Savvidis**  
**Nicolas Tanaka**  
**Jessica Wang**  
**Clara Xu**

ABOVE LEFT: 2024 Sigma Pi Sigma Inductees.

RIGHT: 2024 Phi Beta Kappa Inductees.



Salvatore Vitale

## 2023–2024 Buechner Undergraduate Advising Award

### Salvatore Vitale

Associate Professor of Physics

## Other Undergraduate Awards & Honors

**April Cheng SB '24** (Academic advisor: Michael McDonald) and **Tung Tran SB '24** (Thesis advisor: Hong Liu), were selected to attend the 73rd Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting for Summer 2024.

**April Cheng SB '24** (Academic advisor: Michael McDonald), **Ryan McTigue SB '24** (Academic advisor: Riccardo Comin), and **Olivia Rosenstein SB '24** (Thesis advisors: Mark Vogelsberger, Katelin Schutz) were each awarded a 2024–2025 Fulbright Fellowship for studies at the Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics, Germany (Cheng), the University of Valencia, Institute of Molecular Science, Spain (McTigue), and the ENS Paris-Saclay, France (Rosenstein).

**Owen Dugan SB '24** (Thesis advisor: Marin Soljačić) was awarded a Knight-Hennessy Scholarship to support three years of PhD research in computer science at Stanford University's School of Engineering; and received a 2024 Hertz Foundation Fellowship in support of five years of independent PhD research.

**Chirag Falor SB '24, Shu Ge SB '24, Tung Tran SB '24, Quan Manh Nguyen SB '25, and Leo Yao SB '25**, achieved first place in the Open Category of the "Physics Brawl" ([physicsbrawl.org](http://physicsbrawl.org)), an international online physics competition.

**Chirag Falor SB '24** (Academic advisor: Jesse Thaler) received MIT's 2024 Larry G. Benedict Leadership Award, given annually in honor of two students (one undergraduate and one graduate) who show dedication to "empowering their fellow students to develop as leaders."

**Ben Lou SB '25** (Academic advisor: Janet Conrad) received a 2024 Barry Goldwater Scholarship in recognition of his excellence in research and potential in physics and mathematics research. He also received an honorable mention at the 2023 Alibaba Global Math Competition for ranking in the top 70 out of over 50,000 participants in the competition.

# Student Honors & Awards: Graduate

The Department's graduate awards winners for the 2022-2023 academic year (listed below) were publicly announced at an on-campus event in September 2023. A listing of all prizes and winners for 2023-2024 will appear in the Fall 2025 issue of *physics@mit*.

## 2022-2023 Martin Deutsch Student Award for Excellence in Experimental Physics

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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.

### **Yukun Lu**

Atomic Physics

**Thesis supervisor:** Wolfgang Ketterle

## 2022-2023 Andrew M. Lockett III Memorial Fund Award

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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.

### **Nicholas Rivera**

Theoretical Condensed Matter Physics

**Thesis supervisor:** Marin Soljačić

## 2022–2023 Sergio Vazquez Prize

Established in memory of Sergio Vazquez, a graduate student in the Center for Theoretical Physics who was killed in an automobile accident on April 1, 1990. One thousand dollars to be awarded annually to a graduate student, with preference for a student from an underrepresented sector of the population who had to overcome racial, physical, or financial barriers.

### Michael Calzadilla

Theoretical Astrophysics

**Thesis supervisor:** Michael McDonald

## Other Graduate Honors & Awards

**Michael Calzadilla** (Astrophysics. Thesis supervisor: Michael McDonald) was awarded a 2024 NASA Hubble Fellowship.

**Mason Ng** (Astrophysics. Thesis supervisor: Deepto Chakrabarty) and **Silviu-Marian Udrescu** (Experimental Atomic Physics. Thesis supervisor: Ronald Fernando Garcia Ruiz) were selected to attend the 73rd Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting for Summer 2024.

**Jeong Min (Jane) Park** (Experimental Condensed Matter Physics. Thesis supervisor: Pablo Jarillo-Herrero) was named a member of the 32-member cohort of 2024 Schmidt Science Fellows, joining a community of scientists and supporters who seek to drive sector-wide change by pursuing interdisciplinary research.

## Graduate Degree Recipients 2023–24

### SEPTEMBER 2023

Sarah Geller, PhD  
Robert Johnston, PhD  
Min Gu Kang, PhD  
Tongtong Liu, PhD  
Dimitra Pefkou, PhD  
Nicolas Romeo, PhD  
Joseph Smolsky, PhD

### FEBRUARY 2024

Patrick Moran, PhD  
Andrew Tan, PhD  
Adam Trebach, PhD

### MAY/JUNE 2024

Michael Calzadilla, PhD  
Zihuan Dong, PhD  
Lisa Drummond, PhD  
Li Du, PhD  
Bryan Fichera, PhD  
Atakan Hilmi Firat, PhD  
Aasmund Folkestad, PhD  
Danielle Frostig, PhD  
Dhruva Ganapathy, PhD  
Benjamin Lane, PhD  
Bryan Linehan, PhD  
Seth Musser, PhD  
Mason Ng, PhD

Stephanie O'Neil, PhD  
Jeong Min Park, PhD  
Wenzer Qin, PhD  
Joshua Ramette, PhD  
Zane Rossi, PhD  
Yitian Sun, PhD  
Jingyi Wang, PhD  
Annie Wei, PhD  
Jixiang Yang, SM