



Press release
28 May 2025

Somali Dhal awarded an SPIE Optics and Photonics Scholarship

BELLINGHAM, Washington, USA — **Somali Dhal** has been awarded a 2025 Optics and Photonics Scholarship by SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics, for potential contributions to optics, photonics, or a related field.



Dhal is a PhD candidate in biophotonics at the University College Cork's Tyndall National Institute in Ireland, where Dhal is mentored by Dr. **Rekha Gautam**, Dr. **Katarzyna Komolibus**, and Prof. **Stefan Andersson-Engels**. Dhal's research focuses on advancing oral cancer diagnostics through Raman spectroscopy and photonic crystal fiber-based sensing of biofluids; her aim is to streamline the screening process for oral cancer, contributing to non-invasive, rapid, and reliable biofluid analysis for accessible, patient-friendly healthcare. "The SPIE Optics and Photonics Scholarship strengthens my resolve to contribute meaningful innovations in biophotonics," said Dhal. "It also encourages me to support diversity and collaboration in science, and I am deeply honored by SPIE's recognition of my work."

This month, the Society is awarding \$323,000 in scholarships to 74 outstanding SPIE Student Members, based on their potential contribution to optics and photonics, or a related discipline. Successful applicants were evaluated, selected, and approved by the SPIE Scholarship Committee, chaired by SPIE Senior Member **Brian Primeau**.

Since this program began in 1978, SPIE has distributed more than \$7.5 million dollars in individual scholarships. This ambitious effort reflects the Society's commitment to education as well as to the future generations of optical scientists and engineers around the world.

To view other 2025 scholarship press releases as they become available, please visit the [2025 Scholarship Recipients page](#) or learn more about [SPIE scholarships](#) on spie.org.

SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics, brings engineers, scientists, students, and business professionals together to advance light-based science and technology. The Society, founded in 1955, connects and engages with our global constituency through industry-leading conferences and exhibitions; publications of conference proceedings, books, and journals in the SPIE Digital Library; and career-building opportunities. Over the past five years, we have invested more than \$25 million in the international optics community through our advocacy and support, including scholarships, educational resources, travel grants, endowed gifts, and public-policy development. www.spie.org.

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