



Press release
28 May 2025

Suman Panda awarded an SPIE Optics and Photonics Scholarship

BELLINGHAM, Washington, USA — **Suman Panda** 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.



Panda is a PhD candidate in electrical and computer engineering at Montana State University (MSU) with a master's in physics. She works with Dr. **Charles Kankelborg** on solar physics instrumentation, with a focus on the optical alignment, integration, testing, and calibration of the Full-sun Ultraviolet Rocket SpecTrometer (FURST), a sounding rocket spectrometer designed to obtain high-resolution, full-disk spectra of the Sun in far ultraviolet. She aspires to lead the development of innovative space-based optical instrumentation. Panda is passionate about increasing access to experimental-optics education and actively participates in outreach through the Optics and Photonics Society at MSU. "I am grateful to SPIE for this scholarship," she said, "as it will support my academic journey in optics."

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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