

# PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the Department of Physics and Astronomy is pleased to announce the awards and scholarships that have been presented to members of our department. Congratulations to all our outstanding students!



## Morgan Cassidy (Gene E. Feaster Award)

Morgan Cassidy is a fourth-year student studying Physics and Mathematics from Columbus, Kansas and the 2021-2022 Gene E. Feaster Scholarship recipient. During her time at KU, Morgan has been active in both Math Club and Society of Physics Students. Outside of the Math and Physics Departments, Morgan has been a part of intramural sports, and regularly volunteers at the ECM on campus by helping with meal prep for free community vegan meals. Morgan is interested in studying theoretical high-energy physics, and currently pursues research with Professor KC Kong and Professor Ian Lewis. After graduation, Morgan has moderate to appreciable interest in applying for graduate school to further her studies in Physics.



## Mingyoung Jeng (Gene E. Feaster Award)

Mingyoung Jeng is a junior at KU majoring in Engineering Physics with a concentration in Digital Electronic Systems. They currently sit at a 4.0 GPA and are looking to graduate in May 2022 and plans to go to graduate school eventually to earn a doctorate. For their penultimate semester, they are doing a part-time remote internship with Cobalt Iron and doing supplemental instruction for EECS 140 as extracurricular.



## Claire Cook (Harriett Johnson Scholarship)

Claire Cook is a senior majoring in Astronomy and minoring in German. She is active with student organizations like Westwood House and oSTEM and she has been involved in multiple types of undergraduate research since her freshman year with a focus on AGN and quasars, including an REU with the Green Bank Observatory this past summer. Looking forward, Claire plans to attend graduate school and continue research.



## Anika Goel

### (Ralph E. and Esther Weik Badgley Scholarship)

Anika Goel is a junior at KU double majoring in Astronomy and Visual arts with a minor in Art History. Anika has been a part of Dr. Allison Kirkpatrick's research group, AGN Nerds, since January 2020 and will be working on the research project to measure Eddington Ratios in Quasars in the Fall 2021 semester. Anika is also a member of the DEI committee for the Department of Physics and Astronomy and seeks to work more for encouraging equity and diversity within the department. Anika is a KU housing staff member as well as the president of the Interdisciplinary Students Organization and plans to continue in her efforts to work with diverse students. Anika enjoys painting and dancing and is a member of the KU Lawrence Tango club. Anika wants to have a professional career doing research in Astronomy while also utilizing her more artistic degree towards creative endeavors in the future.



## Alaura Custard (Talty Scholarship for Physics)

Alaura Custard started out at KU as a biology major with the intention of going to medical school. After realizing she had a love for mathematics, she changed her major to mathematics and physics. While she is sure she wants to go to graduate school, she is still deciding on what she wants to study. She hopes to one day earn her PhD.



## Yanzhe (Jenny) Zhang

### (James D. Stranathan Memorial Scholarship)

Yanzhe (Jenny) is a senior from China. She was interested in astronomy and physics when she was 10 and decided to be an astronomer. She hopes to go to graduate school and become a scientist in the future.



## Margaret (Margot) Lockwood (James D. Stranathan Memorial Scholarship)

Margot Lockwood is a physics student at the University of Kansas. During her time at KU, she has been involved with the beekeeping club, rock climbing club, student run radio (KJHK), KU honor society, and Phi Kappa Phi. She approaches questions from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining her knowledge of physics, mathematics, biology, and environmental science. This past summer she worked in Alaska investigating the impact of permafrost thaw on microbial communities. Next semester, she will be in Bermuda researching microbes in relation to microplastics. In her free time, she works artistically. Notably, last year she created a sculpture made of trash for an exhibition at the Spencer Art Museum. Additionally, she works with Professor Ben Sikes doing microecology research. She plans to attend graduate school researching how microbes can be utilized to improve human health, such as microbial drug development, land restoration, and microbe motility research.



## Matthew Hunt (Frank F. Prosser Scholarship)

Matthew is a mathematics and physics major who started his time at KU in the Fall of 2020. He has since involved himself in several undergraduate clubs and, more recently, undergraduate research in physics. He is enthusiastic about both of his majors and plans on pursuing them into graduate school.



## Kate Wienke (Frank F. Prosser Scholarship)

Kate Wienke, a 19-year-old sophomore from Saint Louis, Missouri, is majoring in physics with a minor in astrobiology and is a member of the University Honors Program. Her goal is to pursue a Ph.D. in her major and eventually work for NASA with the hope of one day becoming an astronaut. During her freshman year, Kate walked on to KU's Division 1 Women's Rowing Team where she earned an athletic scholarship and was named to the 2020-21 Academic All-Big 12 Rookie Team; She was one of 14 KU student athletes to maintain a 4.0 GPA for the academic year. Kate has since stepped back from rowing to focus on her academics and engage in research. She plans to work under the advisement of Professor Ian J. M. Crossfield in his research group, the KU ExoLab, which focuses on the detection and characterization of nearby planetary systems.



## Sakthi Kasthuriyeng

(Barbara J. Anthony-Twarog Academic Support Award)

Sakthi is a 4th year graduate student. He is working in the field of computational condensed matter physics under Dr. Peelaers. He also serves on the Physics & Astronomy DEI committee and is involved in the greater Lawrence community.



## Stephanie Amos

(E. E. Slossen Teaching Assistant Award)

Stephanie is a second-year graduate student studying with Prof. Wai-Lun Chan.



## Neno Fuller

(E. E. Slossen Teaching Assistant Award)

Neno Fuller is an aspiring physicist with a penchant for cake, sausage and formulas. He graduated from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York (CUNY) with a B.S. in physics and a minor in mathematics. He loves music, reading, horror movies, food from different culture and engaging with people from all walks of life. His passion is thinking and making the convoluted simple. Though he loves people, his natural ground state is solitude.



## Kim Conger

(E. E. Slossen Teaching Assistant Award)

Kim Conger is a second-year physics graduate student at KU and is originally from Upstate New York. She is currently working with Dr. Greg Rudnick on galaxy evolution in the local universe and spends much of her research time generating and scrutinizing cute n' fuzzy galaxy models. When not otherwise occupied, she can be found enjoying airplane simulators or witnessing the New York Red Bull soccer team add yet another loss to their streak.



## Ryan Scott (Redeker Fellowship)

Ryan joined the KU Department of Physics and Astronomy in the Fall of 2020. He has spent the last year and a half working under Dr. Hui Zhao studying charge carrier lifetimes in van-der Waals heterostructures using ultrafast laser techniques. He hopes to observe charge carriers with high mobility and long lifetimes. Before joining KU, Ryan earned his Bachelor of Science in Physics and a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Kansas State University in 2016. He then spent the next 3 years working in the field of structural engineering where he designed and drew structural plans for commercial construction all over northeast Kansas. Today, Ryan lives in Topeka with his wife and two young daughters. When not working on coursework or research, Ryan enjoys a large variety of activities but likes to focus on spending time with his family and friends.



## Johnpaul Chiagoziem Mbagwu (Carl and Catherine Chaffee Scholarship)

Johnpaul Chiagoziem Mbagwu is a first-generation college student from Isiala Mbano in Imo State, Nigeria. Johnpaul finished in the top one percent of his class with a bachelor's degree in industrial physics. His scholarship offered a great opportunity for this undergraduate education. While on campus, he was able to juggle all his activities and volunteer services while maintaining good grades and not missing any lectures. Finally, he was able to graduate with honors as the first-ever first-class student and the department's overall best. Johnpaul's unwavering pursuit of achievement led him to represent his former university, Imo State University, at a science conference hosted by the federal ministry of science and technology in Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, from 2019 to 2020. Johnpaul has already published several research articles in the peer-reviewed journals. His greatest motivation has always been to inspire young researchers and scholars all around the world. After completing his PhD in Theoretical Particle Physics at KU, Johnpaul plans to work as a researcher and an educator in academia. Johnpaul's goal is to become a world expert in particle physics. Johnpaul's hobbies include, Reading, writing and playing/ watching soccer.