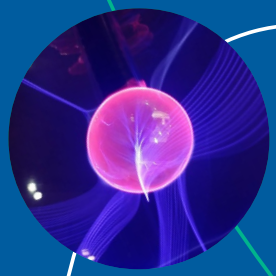
APS Forum for Early Career Scientists
FECS

Newsletter | Spring 2026



Message from the Communication Officer

Dear FECS Members,

We are thrilled to share our Spring 2026 newsletter with you! This is a challenging time for scientists to work together, which makes community more important than ever. Together, we're building and defending spaces for science.

In this newsletter, we share information about our activities at the Global Physics Summit, opportunities to participate in FECS with upcoming elections for various executive positions, letters from current and past chair, APS talks to Congress and FECS awards.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of the contributors to this issue for their valuable insights and efforts. We are eager to include interesting articles from our FECS members in the upcoming FECS newsletter. We encourage you to connect with us on APS Engage (https://engage.aps.org/ fecs/home). We look forward to staying connected with you in the future!

Sincerely,

Xinyu Wang
Postdoc Researcher, University of Michigan

APS Talks to Congress

APS is known for hosting conferences that allow physicists from a diverse range of specialties to present their work and discuss with other experts in their fields. However, APS is also actively representing the interests of physicists to the US Congress and to federal policy makers.

Every year, APS sends a delegation of unit leadership from divisions, forums, and topical groups to Congress to discuss issues of relevance to physicists. This year they discussed several issues including: issues related to immigration and retention of international talent; graduate student & postdoc compensation; and broadening participation in STEM. To find out more about what APS has been doing and what they plan to do, please see the following link: https://cvd.aps.org/

In this Issue

Views and opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by the editor or the APS/FECS.

FECS in APS Global Physics Summit

At GPS 2026, FECS organized a dynamic week of programming centered on the needs and contributions of early-career physicists. FECS-sponsored events addressed major topics shaping the profession today, including AI in science, international collaboration, research with societal impact, participation in transformative large-scale scientific projects, and career opportunities beyond academia. The program also included a poster competition and a joint FECS/FGSA business meeting and reception, creating valuable opportunities for research visibility, networking, and community discussion. Together, these events highlighted FECS's central role in supporting and amplifying early-career voices across the physics community. If you were unable to attend these events, you can still catch up by watching the recordings (https://summit.aps.org/) of following FECS events available on the APS Global Physics Summit website.

Navigating the AI Revolution: Future-Proofing Your Science Career

This session, co-sponsored with FGSA, featured four invited speakers at the intersection of physics and AI, who gave talks and participate in a panel discussion.

The session brought together speakers from academia, national laboratories, and industry to discuss how AI is already shaping physics research, what changes may lie ahead, and how early-career scientists can prepare for a rapidly evolving landscape. The event drew strong audience interest, with reporting describing a crowd of early-stage physicists looking for practical career advice, and its impact extended beyond the meeting itself through coverage in Physics World.

International Physics in Today's World: Overcoming Barriers and Finding Opportunities

This session, co-sponsored with FIP, featured four invited speakers from around the globe, as well as a panel discussion. The session covered international mobility, how to succeed in international collaborations, and how international physics is being reshaped globally.

How Early-Career Physicists Are Solving Society's Greatest Challenges

This session, co-sponsored with FPS, included four invited speakers working on science problems with major societal impact, from extreme weather forecasting to fusion energy to using AI for the benefit of everyone. The final talk was given by the Burton Award winner and focused on early-career physics education and research in intertropical Africa.

Big Science Transforming Physics: Three Megaprojects Defining the 2030s

This session featured three early-career physicists at U.S. national laboratories who are working on big-science projects expected to have a transformational impact on science in the 2030s: the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment (DUNE), the Electron-Ion Collider (EIC), and the international ITER facility.

Beyond Academic Research: High-Impact Career Paths for Physicists

This session, co-sponsored with FIAP, focused on career options for physicists outside traditional academic paths. The panel, whose members each gave talks and participated in a discussion, consisted of staff from IBM and BAE Systems, a startup founder, and a physicist at RAND.

Media Coverage of FECS Events at the APS Global Physics Summit

At this year's APS Global Physics Summit, FECS helped lead timely conversations on some of the biggest questions facing the physics community today: how artificial intelligence may reshape research and careers, and how early-career scientists are navigating a moment of deep uncertainty in American science. FECS was proud to help bring these conversations to our members and more audience, where early-career perspectives were front and center in discussions about AI, careers, and the broader scientific landscape.

These discussions were later featured in the media, highlighting FECS's role in elevating early-career voices within the broader physics community.

In "The coming hurricane: early-career physicists and the crisis in American science," (https://physicsworld.com/a/the-coming-hurricane-early-career-physicists-and-the-crisis-in-american-science/) Physics World online editor Margaret Harris highlights FECS-led discussions on early-career physicists and the challenges facing American science.

In "Is 'vibe physics' the future?" (https://physicsworld.com/a/is-vibe-physics-the-future/), Physics World contributor Candice Chua highlights FECS-led discussions on how AI may reshape physics and what early-career physicists can do to prepare for a changing scientific landscape.

In "How AI shook the world's largest meeting of physicists," (https://www.newscientist.com/article/2520506-how-ai-shook-the-worlds-largest-meeting-of-physicists/) New Scientist highlights AI-related discussions at the APS Global Physics Summit, including FECS session "Navigating the AI revolution: future-proofing your science career."

FECS Executive Committee Membership

Before introducing the new executive committee for the year 2025, we want to sincerely thank all former members whose terms ended in 2025: Nicolette Muldrow, Yuan Zhang, Xuan Chen, and Ruchika Dhawan. Thank you for your service and your work to make FECS what it is today.

The FECS executive committee for 2026 is as follows:

- **Chair: Daniel Marx** (01/26–12/26)
  Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL)
- **Chair-Elect: Valentin Crépel** (01/26–12/26)
  University of Toronto
- **Past Chair: John Palmore Jr** (01/26–12/26)
  University of Washington
- **Treasurer: Sonam Berwal (**01/26–12/27)
- **Secretary: Linsey K. Rodenbach** (01/25–12/26)
  NVIDIA Corporation
- **Councilor: Maria Longobardi** (01/26–12/29)
  University of Basel
- **Member-at-Large: Franziska Treffert** (01/25–12/26)
  Focused Energy Inc.
- **Member-at-Large: Vidushi Adlakha (**01/25–12/26)
  Indiana University Indianapolis
- **Member-at-Large: Yunqiu Kelly Luo** (01/26–12/27)
  University of Southern California
- **Member-at-Large: Luis R De Jesus Baez** (01/26–12/27)
  State Univ of NY - Buffalo
- **International Affairs Officer: Deniz Aybas**
  (01/24–12/26)
  Bilkent University
- **Communications Officer: Xinyu Wang** (01/25–12/26)
  University of Michigan

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone,

After three years on the FECS Executive Committee, the first two as Secretary, and last year as Chair-Elect, I am excited to be taking on the position of Chair this year. This year marks an important milestone for our unit, one decade since its establishment.

The forum's official mission is:

to enhance the Society's ability to meet the needs of early-career scientists, to offer them support services, and to provide them with an opportunity for increased inclusion and participation in the activities and decision-making of the physics community.

Looking at this mission, there are really two important aspects of what FECS tries to accomplish. First, we provide opportunities for our early-career members to grow. For example, we organize programming at the Global Physics Summit (GPS) on subjects that are relevant for our membership, we provide travel grants so that our members can benefit from attending events like the GPS, we organize poster competitions and networking opportunities, and much more. Second, we do our best to ensure that the voice of the early-career demographic is heard. One way we do this is by having representation in APS committees and on the Council; another way is by providing opportunities for early-career professionals to engage in advocacy efforts. For example, in early February I participated in Congressional Visits Day, together with many others, to make the case for continued support for science funding, as well as other issues to improve the talent pipeline and conditions for scientists in the US.

Looking forward, I am truly excited about what lies ahead for FECS in this special anniversary year. FECS was very active at the GPS in Denver in March, with daily invited sessions on topics relevant to the early-career community, including AI in science, opportunities for international collaboration, big-science projects on the horizon, and careers outside of academia. These sessions saw a great deal of interest from our members – in some cases there were long lines of people eager to ask questions to our panel – and a couple of our sessions were subsequently featured in articles in PhysicsWorld and New Scientist magazines. In addition to these sessions, we offered other opportunities to engage with FECS, such as at the poster competition or our business meeting and reception. I greatly enjoyed meeting many of our members in person, and I appreciate your engagement with FECS. Beyond the GPS, we look forward to continuing our close connection with the Government Affairs team to provide feedback to our lawmakers on initiatives that affect early-career scientists. We are always interested in hearing from our members and would welcome your input and suggestions – please feel free to post on our Engage page at any time or email one of our Executive Committee members directly.

Thank you for trusting me to be your Chair this year, and I am excited for everything we will be able to accomplish together.

Daniel Marx
Chair, Forum for Early Career Scientists

Letter from the Past Chair

Dear FECS Members,

As a new year kicks off, I wanted to take a look back at some of the accomplishments that FECS made in the previous year. My main goal as Chair in 2025 was to increase the prominence of FECS within APS. Although I didn't anticipate it at the time, 2025 was a good year for that. It was a year of immense change for APS and a time for action. Changes in federal government policy translated to a period of rapid change and adaptation for universities, research institutions, and industry. FECS was there working with APS leadership making sure your voice was heard. We worked with APS leadership and other APS units to prepare APS actions on changes to the US federal research budget, federal policy changes regarding immigration and visas, and the RESEARCHER Act (a proposed bill to improve compensation for graduate students and postdocs), among other things. FECS was also honored to send Prof. Kelly Luo to represent APS at the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology ceremony in Paris held by the United Nations (specifically UNESCO).

In addition to helping APS on its external affairs, FECS has a very strong history of collaboration with other APS Forums such as FGSA, FIAP, FIP, FPS, and others. We work with the other forums to host events at the annual Global Physics Summit and other meetings. We also collaborate on awards, travel grants, and prizes. One of my major initiatives for 2025 was to expand this collaborative spirit to work more with Divisions and Technical Groups. We reached out to several of these units to discuss how FECS can help them develop programming for early career scientists that are geared towards their interests. Importantly, all programming was created by, operated by, and supported by the unit, while FECS helped with some of the logistics of getting new programming off the ground. A few helpful programs arose from those efforts, including the now regularly recurring DCOMP Early Career Office Hours developed by Dr. Francesco Belli (SUNY Buffalo) for the Division of Computational Physics.

For the upcoming year, as Past Chair, I hope to continue engaging with these efforts and helping FECS to represent you for whatever challenges and opportunities occur in 2026.

Best,

John Palmore Jr
Past Chair, Forum for Early Career Scientists
Assistant Professor, University of Washington – Seattle

Sonam Berwal's Congressional Visits Day

I participated in APS Congressional Visits Day to advocate for the 2025 policy priorities of the physics community through direct engagement with congressional offices. Our team focused on Investing in Federal Research and Development (Federal R&D): Making Michigan an Innovation Leader, while reinforcing the broader priorities that sustain U.S. scientific leadership.

During our meetings, we emphasized that strong and predictable federal investment in research and development is essential to maintaining America's global competitiveness. In Michigan, federal R&D funding supports cutting-edge research at universities, strengthens collaborations with national laboratories and industry, accelerates technology transfer, and drives high-quality job creation. Sustained funding for agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology enables both foundational discoveries and applied innovations that power regional economic growth.

We also discussed how federal R&D investment underpins other national priorities. Securing U.S. leadership in quantum science and technology requires long-term commitment to basic research today to realize transformative technologies tomorrow. Addressing the STEM workforce crisis demands broadening participation in science education and creating accessible pathways into research careers. Ensuring competitive compensation for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers is critical to sustaining the talent pipeline that drives discovery and innovation. Furthermore, international STEM students remain indispensable contributors to the U.S. research enterprise, strengthening scientific output and entrepreneurship.

Our conversations underscored that investments in science are investments in economic resilience, workforce development, and national security. By prioritizing federal R&D, Congress can reinforce Michigan's position as a center of innovation while safeguarding the nation's scientific and technological leadership. This experience highlighted the importance of continued dialogue between policymakers and the scientific community to ensure evidence-based decision-making and long-term prosperity.

Sonam Berwal
Treasurer, Forum for Early Career Scientists

Awards and Honors

Each year FECS sponsors several awards and honors for our members. These include the FECS Diversity and Inclusion Award, the FECS March Meeting Travel Grant, the APS-EPS-ICTP Travel Award Fellowship Programme (ATAP), and the Distinguished Student Program (cosponsored with the APS Forum on International Physics).

We are going to change the names of some grants above. Please stay up to date with all opportunities by visiting the FECS webpage on APS Engage: https://engage.aps.org/fecs/honors/prizes-awards

2026 FECS Travel Award winners

FECS offers travel grants to support the attendance of early career scientists for the APS Global Physics Summit. These grants are equivalent to early-bird registration costs for in-person attendance.

Savannah Thais

Luhang Yang

Pierre Kawak

Sotirios Papadopoulos

Cheng Long

Srishti Pal

Tanwi Debnath

Halima Giovanna Ahmad

Hongze Li

Artem Ryzhov

Ignaas Jimidar

Mrinal Kanti Giri

Yogesh Patil

Matthias Kuehne

2026 FECS Poster Award Winners

These are our winners:

Michael Toriyama

Matthew Matzelle

Vaibhav Sharma

Ali Raza Mirza

Preetha Sarkar