



Press release
24 May 2024

Maria Josef Lopera-Acosta awarded an SPIE Optics and Photonics Scholarship

BELLINGHAM, Washington, USA — **Maria Josef Lopera-Acosta** has been awarded a 2024 Optics and Photonics Scholarship by SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics, for potential contributions to optics, photonics, or a related field.



Lopera-Acosta is currently enrolled in a joint PhD program at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium) and at Universidad EAFIT (Colombia). Her research revolves around holography, with a focus on the development of miniaturized and cost-effective hardware. Additionally, she incorporates software-based enhancements into her research, with the goal of creating technology applicable to both medical diagnostics and environmental monitoring. In her PhD project, Lopera-Acosta who holds an FWO Fundamental Research Fellowship, is dedicated to the development of a lensless holographic system. This system aims to detect microplastics and microorganisms present in freshwater sources.

This month, the Society is awarding \$303,000 in scholarships to 72 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 2024 scholarship press releases as they become available, please visit the [2024 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, SPIE has contributed more than \$24 million to 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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