



Press release
24 May 2024

Mariia Stepanova awarded an SPIE Optics and Photonics Scholarship

BELLINGHAM, Washington, USA — **Mariia Stepanova** 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.



Stepanova is a PhD student in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department at University of California, Irvine (USA), supervised by **Professor Maxim Shcherbakov**. Her interdisciplinary research centers on nanophotonics, with a particular focus on manipulating phonon-polaritons at the nanoscale. She is interested in the physics of light-matter interaction at its fundamental level, as well as in possible relevant applications. "I find this research field fascinating, since the strong electromagnetic field confinement opens up the potential to overcome the diffraction limit and enhance the molecular sensors performance in the mid-IR range," said Stepanova.

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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