

4 ASU students awarded Goldwater Scholarships for excellence in STEM research

By Megan Neely, ASU News
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Four students in [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) were named 2026 [Goldwater Scholars](#), joining a select group of undergraduates pursuing research careers in science, engineering and mathematics.

Joshua Cohon, Rachel Honor, Federico Noguer and Ariana Rahman are among the 454 total scholarship winners, selected from a pool of 1,485 nominees across 482 academic institutions in the U.S. This year marks the highest number of scholars supported by the Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation.

Established in 1986, the Goldwater Foundation's scholarship program honors U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater and was designed to identify, encourage and support undergraduate students who want to pursue careers in STEM-related research.

“What most impresses me is how these outstanding students embody the spirit of the [ASU Charter](#),” said [Kyle Mox](#), associate dean for national scholarships and director of ASU’s Lorraine W. Frank Office of National Scholarships Advisement. “They are leveraging their education not just for personal advancement, but to generate knowledge with real public value — whether that’s improving human health, advancing sustainable technologies or expanding the frontiers of discovery. That commitment to impact is what makes this group exceptional.”

Every year, U.S. institutions can nominate up to six sophomores or juniors for the award. Candidates applying through ASU are selected through a competitive internal process. For this scholarship cycle, 19 applications were submitted. The four selected to represent the university is a rare feat — marking just the fifth time four students have been chosen from a submitted pool in the past 20 years.

Since 1989, 81 ASU students have received the Goldwater Scholarship. Nationally, the foundation has now awarded over 11,600 scholarships since its inception.

Meet the 2026 Goldwater Scholars

Joshua Cohon

Majors: Mathematics, physics and English (literature, minor)

Colleges: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Barrett, The Honors College

Joshua Cohon started his first research project in 2024 with [Rogier Windhorst](#)'s group, studying a bright galaxy that lives in the very early universe during a time period known as the "Epoch of Reionization." [The culminating findings](#) were recently published in Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia. His more recent work includes simulating the amplification of magnetic fields in intergalactic space via turbulence driven by reionization, a novel mechanism for generating the present-day intergalactic magnetic field discovered by his advisor [Chris Cain](#).

"I've also worked with [Kevin Croker](#) on the theory of cosmological coupling, which is a new theory of black holes and dark energy that could help alleviate some current theory-observation tensions in cosmology," Cohon said.

Since this past summer, he has been investigating the world of topology and studying fluid dynamics and general relativity within the physics realm.

Cohon has been involved in organizations at ASU, including the Scholars of Physical Mathematics, a club where members discuss and present on topics they're interested in, with an emphasis on math, science and philosophy. After graduation, he plans to pursue a PhD in either mathematics or physics.

"Receiving this scholarship really validates a lot of the work I've put in over the past two years, and makes me hopeful that the scientific community could be a good home for me in the long term," Cohon said.

Rachel Honor

Majors: Physics and earth and space exploration (astrophysics)

Colleges: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Barrett, The Honors College

Rachel Honor joined the Windhorst Cosmology Research Group during her junior year of high school. Her introduction to the group came via the Sundial Project mentoring program at ASU. She was involved in creating simulated James Webb Space Telescope images in 2022 to test the JWST image calibration pipeline before receiving the first real images. Now, she uses this pipeline to process real JWST images for Project SKYSURFIR.

Honor has also worked on projects to study quenching, a process by which galaxies stop forming stars, in a massive cluster known as "El Gordo."

"I found that the fraction of quenched low-mass galaxies in El Gordo increases with proximity to the cluster's two major mass peaks," Honor said. "I wrote [a paper](#) about these results, which was

published in the Astrophysical Journal earlier this year.”

Honor is heading to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center for an internship this summer to work on preparing the Roman Space Telescope to study galaxy clusters. She then plans to pursue a PhD in astrophysics after graduation and focus her research on galaxy evolution.

“While it is an incredible honor in itself, this award is especially meaningful to me because it represents the immense work and time I have spent conducting this exciting research over the past four years,” Honor said. “I am so lucky to have the opportunity to do this research, and I hope to bring astronomy research opportunities to others as well, just as my incredible mentors did for me.”

Fred Noguer

Major: Astronomical and planetary sciences

College: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Fred Noguer, ASU’s first veteran student to receive the Goldwater Scholarship, has participated in numerous research experiences related to exoplanet projects focused on transit photometry, radial velocity analysis and exoplanet validation. He has updated ephemerides and orbital parameters for known exoplanets, which helps preserve accurate transit times for future observations and studying candidate multi-planet systems for validation and confirmation.

“I am currently working on the confirmation of a new solar system that includes three sub-Neptune exoplanets,” Noguer said. “I am also involved in work connected to citizen-science and collaborative observing efforts, including projects that use data from both professional and small-telescope observations.”

Outside of his research, Noguer has been an active team member of the NASA Exoplanet Watch for three years and is a member of the Society of Physics Students and the American Astronomical Society.

After graduating, Noguer plans to pursue a graduate degree in either astrophysics or planetary sciences.

“This award means a great deal to me, not just personally but for everything it represents. As a first-generation college student, concrete mason and former Marine, my path to this moment has been anything but traditional,” Noguer said.

“The Goldwater Scholarship is validation that I am on the right path and a reminder that true grit and determination can open doors that once felt out of reach. I hope my story shows that people from nontraditional backgrounds belong in science and research, and that we can take on big, challenging problems.”

Ariana Rahman

Majors: Biological sciences (biomedical sciences) and biomedical informatics and data science

Colleges: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; College of Health Solutions; Barrett, The Honors College

Ariana Rahman, also a [Flinn Scholar](#), has been studying immunology and women's health. Her current research at Mayo Clinic centers around endometriosis, looking into the pathologic interactions between T cells and B cells within tertiary lymphoid structures in patient lesions.

"In this work, I use multiplex immunofluorescence imaging to examine how these immune cell interactions may drive chronic inflammation and disease progression," Rahman said.

Rahman has been involved in several organizations during her time at ASU. She currently serves as an ACT lead with the [American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#), participating in advocacy efforts for cancer research and equitable access to care. She also works with the [Refugee Education and Clinic Team](#) to support efforts to address health disparities among refugees and asylum seekers through community-based care.

After graduation, she plans to pursue an MD/PhD to build a career as a physician-scientist and conduct research on immunology and translational medicine. She hopes to develop more equitable and effective approaches to complex diseases.

"This award means a great deal to me because it affirms the kind of scientist I hope to become. The Goldwater Scholarship represents not only recognition of the work I have done so far, but also encouragement to keep pursuing research that asks meaningful questions and has the potential to improve lives," Rahman said.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Two of this year's four ASU Goldwater Scholars have worked in Regents Professor Rogier Windhorst's lab, which analyzes data and images obtained from the James Webb Space Telescope. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News

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