

# Astrophysics graduate sets sights on space

By Kim Baptista, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

Om Biswal grew up in Burla, Sambalpur, always curious about space. His interest only grew stronger in high school, when he realized he wanted to study the universe, not just wonder about it. This May, he will graduate from Arizona State University's [School of Earth and Space Exploration](#) (SESE) with a Bachelor of Science in earth and space exploration, focusing on astrophysics, and minoring in data science.

"My curiosity about space was there from childhood, but I lacked direction," Biswal said. "It was in high school that my 'aha' moment arrived — when I began to seriously study physics and realized I could combine that passion with my curiosity about space. That realization is why I'm graduating today with a bachelor's (degree) in astrophysics."

At ASU, Biswal learned an important lesson that shaped how he approached both his studies and life: No one can know everything.

"In a field like astrophysics, there are so many vast subfields it's nearly impossible to master them all," he said. "Once I accepted that learning is gradual, I changed how I approach both school and personal life."

Biswal chose Arizona State University because it offered what he was looking for: good scholarships, great faculty and a big, diverse campus community.

"ASU met multiple criteria I had for choosing where to spend four years — a strong scholarship package, faculty among the best in their fields, and a large, diverse campus community," he said.

Two professors made a big difference during his time at ASU. SESE Assistant Professor [Molly Simon](#)'s introductory space course inspired him in his first year, and Professor [Judd Bowman](#)'s advanced astronomy class became one of his favorite college experiences.

"Dr. Molly Simon's introductory space course in my freshman year genuinely motivated me and made me excited for what was to come," Biswal said. "Later, Dr. Bowman's upper-division astronomy course, where we investigated the deeper cosmos, was one of the most rewarding learning experiences of my field."

Simon shared, "It's been a pleasure watching Om thrive since he took my course his first semester as a SESE major. Although his academics and research experience are truly impressive, it's his commitment to mentoring and showing up for the next cohort of SESE students that will leave such

a lasting impression on our department.”

Biswal encourages current students to stay curious, take initiative and build connections.

“Don’t be afraid to ask questions and don’t hesitate to seize the opportunities in front of you,” he said. “Also, build connections within your field and beyond.”

While at ASU, Biswal liked studying in Armstrong Hall, Noble Library, the Student Services Center and especially the Hayden Library basement classrooms.

“For focused solo work, I loved the basement classrooms of Hayden Library, where I could use the whiteboards for mind maps and big calculations,” he said.

After graduation, Biswal plans to spend a year working in space and science outreach, and to continue his research to prepare for graduate school applications.

Looking ahead, Biswal leaves ASU with a degree, a better understanding of the universe, a stronger sense of purpose and a goal to make space science more accessible.

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**Main image**



Om Biswal is graduating this May with a Bachelor of Science in earth and space exploration, focusing on astrophysics, and minoring in data science from ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration. Courtesy photo