



Partnership for Scientific Inquiry



Building tomorrow's researchers today

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

May 2026 | Vol.1

Director's Welcome

Welcome to the first-ever PSI newsletter!

Since our founding in 1999, the Partnership for Scientific Inquiry (PSI) has evolved significantly. We are launching this annual newsletter to celebrate our students' achievements and to stay connected with you, our PSI alumni community.

PSI remains a distinctive and unique opportunity for high school students to engage deeply with the scientific community. Our "prep then practice" philosophy combines a semester-long lecture series and one-on-one mentorship with a hands-on internship. We focus on training students to think like scientists while teaching practical, hands-on skills that build confidence in the lab. This integrated approach makes this experience so impactful for our participants.

In recent years, we have intentionally strengthened our focus on supporting students who are traditionally underrepresented in STEM or face significant barriers to accessing scientific careers. Our goal is to cultivate the next generation of scientists, clinicians, and educators, ensuring that PSI serves as a meaningful stepping stone in their professional journeys.

We need your help to continue this mission. PSI was supported for many years by a private philanthropist, but as we transition to other funding mechanisms, demonstrating our impact is essential. Please consider completing our outcome survey; your career trajectory provides the most powerful evidence of PSI's value. Additionally, if you are in a position to give back, 100% of your donation directly supports current PSI students.

Thank you for being part of the PSI community! We are deeply grateful for the role you have played in PSI's story and for the paths you continue to forge beyond it.

Sincerely,



Sam King

3rd year OHSU MD/PhD Student
PSI Co-Director



Sofia M. Vignolo, Ph.D.

6th year OHSU MD/PhD Student
PSI Co-Director



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About PSI

Founded in 1999, the PSI introduces high school students to the process of biomedical research through a **16-week didactic course** and **optional summer internship** at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).

Our mission is to open doors to biomedical research for students in Oregon and the Portland metro community who might not have had the chance otherwise, particularly those without built-in advantages.

This includes having parents without graduate-level education and those from low socioeconomic status. Our goal is to create a level playing field where talent, curiosity, and dedication are the primary criteria for success, thus inspiring future leaders in science from different backgrounds. We are committed to providing equitable access and opportunities in the world of biomedical research, ensuring that every aspiring student, regardless of their background, can participate and excel in this transformative experience.

Program Outline

CLASSES

Academic Term

December – May

Weekly Classes
Weekly Mentorship meetings
Research fundamentals
Scientific methodology

3 Major Assignments

RESEARCH

Summer Internship

June – August

250-hour research experience
Faculty mentoring
Hands-on lab work

Research Project

PRESENT

PSI Conference

August

Poster presentations
Research showcase
Program conclusion

Final Presentation



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Our Leadership Team

Co-Directors



Sam King
MD/PhD Student



Sofia Vignolo, Ph.D.
MD/PhD Student

Teaching Assistants



Erin Santos
Ph.D. Student



Madison Hupp
Ph.D. Student



Alyssa Granados
Ph.D. Student



Kareem Woods
MD/PhD Student



Kevin Elk
Ph.D. Student



Peter Tran
MD/PhD Student



Ruhika Prasad
M.D. Student



Arthi Inagandla
MD/MPH Student

Faculty Support



Dr. Edward Neuwelt, MD
PSI Founder



Dr. Leslie Muldoon, PhD
Faculty Advisor



Dr. Ramon Barajas Jr., MD
Faculty Advisor



In Memoriam: Dr. Edward Neuwelt, MD

Founder of PSI

Dr. Edward Neuwelt was a visionary physician-scientist, mentor, and educator whose impact continues to shape generations of students and researchers. As the founder of PSI, he created a program dedicated to opening doors to biomedical research for high school students, particularly those who may not have otherwise had access to these opportunities.

For over two decades, Dr. Neuwelt championed the belief that curiosity, determination, and mentorship can transform a student's path. His commitment to education and equity created opportunities for students to engage in science early and meaningfully. Through PSI and his broader work, he inspired countless students to pursue careers in medicine, research, and beyond.

Beyond PSI, Dr. Neuwelt was internationally recognized for his groundbreaking contributions to neuro-oncology and for advancing treatments that improved outcomes for patients with brain tumors. His work bridged science and medicine in ways that changed lives both in the clinic and in the classroom.

Dr. Neuwelt's legacy lives on through the thousands of students, mentors, and scientists who have been part of PSI. His vision continues to inspire our mission to build a more inclusive and impactful future in science.

We are deeply grateful for his leadership, mentorship, and lasting contributions to the PSI community.





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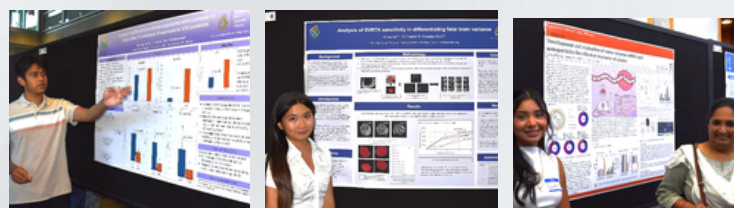
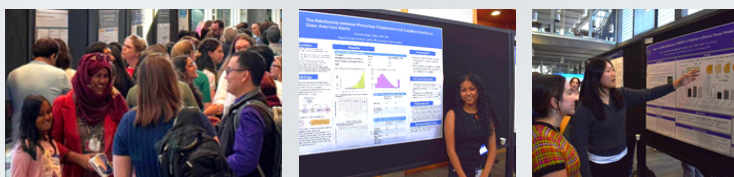
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Program Highlights

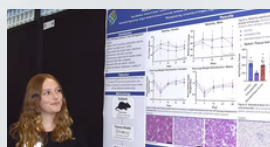
2025 PSI Conference

The inaugural in-person 2025 PSI Conference, held on **August 20th** at **Oregon Health & Science University**, brought together **over 200** students, mentors, families, and supporters to celebrate a summer of learning and research. The event featured:

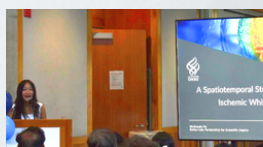
- **Lightning Talks:** Short presentations highlighting student research and literature projects.
- **Poster Presentations:** Over 40 posters spanning biomedical research, engineering, neuroscience, genetics, and more.
- **Award Ceremony:** Recognition of students for creativity, scientific rigor, and presentation skills.



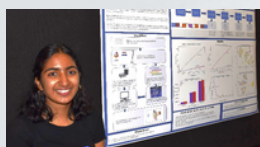
2025 PSI Awards



Kaia Matthias
Best Lightning Talk
1st Place



McKenzie Vo
Best Lightning Talk
2nd Place



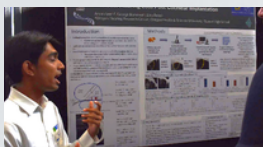
Swathi Ram
Best Lightning Talk
3rd Place

Vrasti Jain | Best Lightning Talk | Honorable Mention



Vrasti Jain
Best Poster Presentation
1st Place

Maryam Al-Medyadi | Best Poster Presentation | Honorable Mention



Aryan Iyer
Best Poster Presentation
2nd Place



Misha Nasarpuri
Best Poster Presentation
3rd Place

PSI hosted both in-person and virtual conferences this year, with in-person awardees shown on the left and virtual conference awardees listed on the right.

- **Lightning Talks:**
 - 1st Place: Swathi Ram
 - 2nd Place: Vrasti Jain
 - 3rd Place: Kaia Matthias
 - Honorable Mention: Ava Hsieh
- **Poster Presentations:**
 - 1st Place: Vrasti Jain
 - 2nd Place: Krrish Ravuri
 - 3rd Place: McKenzie Vo
 - Honorable Mention: Sophia Hong



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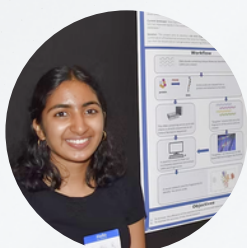


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Student Testimonials



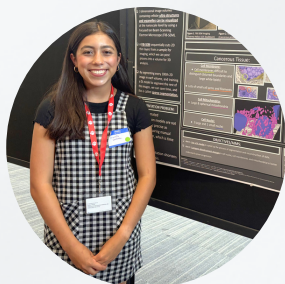
Swathi Rami
PSI Class of 2025

Prior to PSI, I was really interested in biology, but I had almost no experience with research. Through PSI's weekly lectures, I got the chance to **learn about so many areas of research I did not know existed**. My favorite part of the experience was being given the opportunity to do a summer internship at OHSU. I was really surprised to find that I actually started to enjoy the computational side even more than the wet lab side over the course of the summer, and that I love coding and analyzing data! Whereas beforehand I wanted to go into wet lab biomedical research, **I am now really interested in pursuing computational biology research**.



Vrasti Jain
PSI Class of 2025

My biggest doubt before PSI about pursuing research was that I didn't have it in me to do well enough and succeed. To me, research always seemed super daunting. The mentors in PSI, as well as my mentors in my lab, were very impactful to me. It made me realize that to do research, you don't need extensive experience. Instead, determination to learn and curiosity are valued in these careers. **PSI opened my eyes to all the different opportunities in science**. I would advise a new applicant not to have a closed mindset, but instead explore and be open to all the different options. The moment that truly shifted my mindset was when I repeatedly heard speakers talk about careers they found through exploration rather than planning. **It made me realize that exploring is not a sign of uncertainty, but of growth**.



Gianella Contreras-Rodriguez
PSI Class of 2025

When I was growing up, I rarely saw anyone like me in science or medicine. My parents did not attend college and lacked access to the networks that often serve as gateways into this field. Through PSI, I connected with BIPOC students and I saw myself represented in the scientific community for the first time. PSI showed me that I was part of a community that truly belonged in science. The most meaningful moment of this program was presenting my research at the PSI symposium. Standing in a room with my family, mentors, and peers, I felt a sense of belonging and empowerment unlike anything I had experienced before. **This program gave me access to so many amazing experiences and opportunities, and I hope future PSI students will feel the same**.



McKenzie Vo
PSI Class of 2025

Before PSI, my biggest obstacle in pursuing scientific research was self-doubt. PSI filled that gap by pairing me with a supportive mentor who encouraged me to ask questions, no matter how small. Through the program, I explored neuroscience hands-on, learning lab techniques and skills that made science feel tangible and exciting. My advice for new applicants is to take full advantage of every opportunity PSI offers: **ask the "stupid" questions and stay curious**. Since PSI, I've become **determined to join a lab in college and continue pursuing research in neuroscience**. I now aim to contribute to meaningful change to advance research that makes a real-world impact!



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Program Stats

2026 Cohort Stats

- **11%** receive government assistance
- **30%** have parents whose highest level of education is high school or less
- **33%** are racial/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in science
- **78%** are multilingual or speak another language at home
- **98%** attend a public high school



Want to give back?

[Donate to PSI](#)

100%, *and we really mean 100%*, of your donations go straight to students.