# Stella Koch Ocker

# CURRICULUM VITAE

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## **EDUCATION**

Cornell University	Ithaca, NY
Ph.D. in Astronomy	2023
M.S. in Astronomy	2020
Oberlin College	Oberlin, OH
B.A. with High Honors in Physics (Concentration in Astrophysics)	2018

#### RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Interstellar, circumgalactic, & intergalactic media
- Energetic transients and compact objects, including fast radio bursts & pulsars
- Precision pulsar timing & its applications: gravitational wave detection & General Relativity

# SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

• International Space Science Institute (ISSI/Bern) International Team Grant	2024-2025
Carnegie-Caltech Brinson Prize Fellowship	2023-
Cranson & Edna Shelley Graduate Research Award, Cornell University	2023
NASA Outer Heliosphere Guest Investigator Grant	2020-2023
• Outstanding Student Presentation Award, American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting	2022
• International Astronomical Union & Heising-Simons Foundation Travel Grant	2022
Cranson & Edna Shelley Graduate Research Award, Cornell University	2021
• Prize for Highest Scientific Merit, Cornell KK Wang Space Tech Poster Competition	2021
• Cranson & Edna Shelley Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Cornell University	2020
Honorable Mention, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Competition	2020
Graduate Student Fellowship, Cornell University	2018-2019
Carl E. Howe Prize in Physics, Oberlin College	2018
Oberlin Physics & Astronomy Department Honors Program	2017-2018
• Robert Weinstock Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Physics Coursework (Oberlin)	2017
John Frederick Oberlin Merit Scholarship	2014-2018

#### REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

- 1. **Ocker SK**, Chen M, Oh SP, Sharma P. "Microphysics of circumgalactic turbulence probed by fast radio bursts and quasars." Under review at *ApJ*. arXiv:2503.02329
- 2. **Ocker SK** and Cosens M. "Probing the low-velocity regime of non-radiative shocks with neutron star bow shocks." *ApJL* 975:L31. November, 2024. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/ad87cf
- 3. **Ocker SK**, Anderson LD, Lazio J, Cordes JM, Ravi V. "Implications for Galactic electron density structure from pulsar sightlines intersecting HII regions." *ApJ* 974:10. October, 2024. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad6a51

- 4. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Stinebring DR, Dolch T, Pelgrims V, McKee JW, Giannakopoulos C, Reardon DJ. "Pulsar scintillation through thick and thin: Bow shocks, bubbles, and the broader interstellar medium." *MNRAS* 527:7568. January, 2024. doi:10.1093/mnras/stad3683
- 5. Ocker SK, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Li D, Niu CH, McKee JW, Law CJ, Anna-Thomas R. "Scattering variability detected from the circumsource medium of FRB 20190520B." MNRAS 519:821. February, 2023. doi:10.1093/mnras/stac3547
- 6. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Gorsuch M. "Radio scattering horizons for interstellar and extragalactic transients." *ApJ* 934:71. July, 2022. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ac75ba
- 7. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Niu CH, Li D, McKee JW, Law CJ, Tsai CW, Anna-Thomas R, Yao JM, Cruces M. "The large dispersion and scattering of FRB 20190520B are dominated by the host galaxy." *ApJ* 931:87. May, 2022. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ac6504
- 8. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Dolch T. "An in situ study of turbulence near stellar bow shocks." *ApJ* 922:233. December, 2021. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ac2b28
- 9. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Gurnett D, Kurth B, Spangler S. "Persistent plasma waves in interstellar space detected by Voyager 1." *Nature Astronomy* 5, 761-765. May, 2021. doi:10.1038/s41550-021-01363-7
- 10. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S. "Constraining galaxy haloes from the dispersion and scattering of fast radio bursts and pulsars." *ApJ* 911:2. April, 2021. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/abeb6e
- 11. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S. "Electron density structure of the local Galactic disk." *ApJ* 897:2. July, 2020. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ab98f9
- 12. **Ocker SK**, Petrie G. "The effects of spatial smoothing on solar magnetic helicity parameters and the hemispheric helicity sign rule." *ApJ*. 832:162. November, 2016. doi:10.3847/0004-637X/832/2/162
- 13. Reardon DJ, Main R, **Ocker SK** et al. "Bow shock and Local Bubble plasma unveiled by the scintillating millisecond pulsar J0437–4715." *Nature Astronomy*. April, 2025. doi:10.1038/s41550-025-02534-6
- 14. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 yr dataset: Posterior predictive checks for gravitational-wave detection with pulsar timing arrays." *Phys. Review D* 111:4. February, 2025. doi:10.1103/PhysRevD.111.042011
- 15. Lee et al. (including **Ocker SK**). "The emission of interpulses by a 6.45-h-period coherent radio transient." *Nature Astronomy*. January, 2025. doi:10.1038/s41550-024-02452-z
- 16. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 yr Data Set: Running of the Spectral Index." *ApJL* 978:L29. January, 2025. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/ad99d3
- 17. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 Yr Data Set: Removing Pulsars One by One from the Pulsar Timing Array." *ApJ* 978:168. January, 2025. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad93aa
- 18. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 yr Data Set: Looking for Signs of Discreteness in the Gravitational-wave Background." *ApJ* 978:31. January, 2025. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad93d5
- 19. Sharma K, Ravi V, Connor L, Law C, **Ocker SK**, Sherman M et al. "Preferential occurrence of fast radio bursts in massive star-forming galaxies." *Nature* 635:61. November, 2024. doi:10.1038/s41586-024-08074-9
- 20. Turner JE, Dolch T, Cordes JM, **Ocker SK** et al. "A Cyclic Spectroscopy Study of PSR B1937+21: Demonstration of Improved Scintillometry." *ApJ* 927:16. September, 2024. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad5af9

- 21. Sherman M, Ravi V, El-Badry K, Sharma K, **Ocker SK**, Kosogorov N, Connor L, Sharma K. "Searching for magnetar binaries disrupted by core-collapse supernovae." *MNRAS* 531:2379. June, 2024. doi:10.1093/mnras/stae1289
- 22. Johnson A et al. (including **Ocker SK**). "NANOGrav 15-year gravitational-wave background methods." *Physical Review D* 109:103012. May, 2024. doi:10.1103/PhysRevD.109.103012
- 23. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "Comparing recent pulsar timing array results on the nanohertz stochastic gravitational wave background." *ApJ* 966:105. May, 2024. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad36be
- 24. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 yr data set: Search for transverse polarization modes in the graviational wave background." *ApJL* 964:L14. March, 2024. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/ad2a51
- 25. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 12.5 yr data set: A computationally efficient eccentric binary search pipeline and constraints on an eccentric supermassive binary candidate in 3C 66B." *ApJ* 963:144. March, 2024. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad1f61
- 26. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 12.5 yr data set: Search for gravitational wave memory." *ApJ* 963:61. March, 2024. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad0726
- 27. Becsy et al. (including **Ocker SK**). "How to detect an astrophysical nanohertz gravitational wave background." *ApJ* 959:9. December, 2023. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ad09e4
- 28. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15 yr data set: Search for anisotropy in the gravitational wave background." *ApJ Letters* 956:L3. October, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acf4fd
- 29. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15-year data set: Evidence for a gravitational wave background." *ApJ Letters* 951:L8. June, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acdac6
- 30. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15-year data set: Observations and timing of 68 millisecond pulsars." *ApJ Letters* 951:L9. June, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acda9a
- 31. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15-year data set: Detector characterization and noise budget." *ApJ Letters* 951:L10. June, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acda88
- 32. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 15-year data set: Search for signals from new physics." *ApJ Letters* 951:L11. June, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acdc91
- 33. Falxa et al. (including **Ocker SK**). "Searching for continuous gravitational waves in the second data release of the International Pulsar Timing Array." *MNRAS* 521:5077. June, 2023. doi:10.1093/mnras/stad812.
- 34. The NANOGrav Collaboration (including **Ocker SK**). "The NANOGrav 12.5 year data set: Bayesian limits on gravitational waves from individual supermassive black hole binaries." *ApJ Letters* 951:L28. July, 2023. doi:10.3847/2041-8213/acdbc7.
- 35. Anna-Thomas R, Connor L, ... **Ocker SK** et al. "Magnetic field reversal in the turbulent environment around a repeating fast radio burst." *Science* 380:6645. May, 2023. doi:10.1126/science.abo6526
- 36. Stinebring DR, Rickett BJ, Minter AH, Hill AS, Jussila AP, Mathis L, McLaughlin MA, **Ocker SK**, Ransom SM. "A scintillation arc survey of 22 pulsars with low to moderate dispersion measures." *ApJ* 941:34. December, 2022. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ac8ea8
- 37. Niu CH, Li D, ..., **Ocker SK** et al. "A repeating fast radio burst in a dense environment with a compact persistent radio source." *Nature* 606, 873877. June, 2022. doi:10.1038/s41586-022-04755-5

- 38. Cordes JM, **Ocker SK**, Chatterjee S. "Redshift estimation and constraints on intergalactic and interstellar media from dispersion and scattering of fast radio bursts." *ApJ* 931:88. May, 2022. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/ac6873
- 39. Stinebring DR, Rickett BJ, **Ocker SK**. "The frequency dependence of scintillation arc thickness in pulsar B1133+16." *ApJ* 870:2. January, 2019. doi:10.3847/1538-4357/aaef80

#### Non-Refereed Publications

- 1. **Ocker SK** & Cordes JM. "NE2001p: A native Python implementation of the NE2001 Galactic electron density model." *RNAAS*, 8, 17. January, 2024. doi:10.3847/2515-5172/ad1bf1
- 2. **Ocker SK**, Cordes JM, Chatterjee S, Hazboun J, Dolch T, Stinebring D, Madison D, White S, Taylor G, Lewandowska N, Lam M. "Heliosphere meets interstellar medium, in a Galactic context." Decadal Survey for Solar and Space Physics (Heliophysics) 2024-2033, white paper, *BAAS*, 55, 301. July, 2023. doi:103847/252cfeb.dd406a9d

# **A**FFILIATIONS

DSA-2000 Pulsar Search Working Group	2025-
• Pulsar Science Working Group, Square Kilometer Array Observatory (SKAO)	2024-
• North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav)	2019–
Voyager Interstellar Mission	
NASA Outer Heliosphere Guest Investigator	2020–2023
Science Steering Group	2023-

# TELESCOPE TIME ALLOCATIONS (PI: OCKER)

- Magellan Telescopes, Las Campanas Observatory: 5.5 nights (2025A), 8.5 nights (2024B), 4.5 nights (2024A)
- Keck II Telescope, W.M. Keck Observatory: 3 nights (2025A), 1.5 nights (2024A)
- Hale Telescope, Palomar Observatory: 2 nights (2025A), 2.5 nights (2024B)
- Green Bank Telescope: 27.5 hr Rank B (2024B), 16.5 hr Rank A (2023A)
- Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope: 17.3 hr Rank A (2021)

#### **TEACHING**

• <b>Python Programming Workshop</b> at Cornell University Research Experiences for Undergraduates	Summer 2021
• <b>Head Teaching Assistant</b> at Cornell University Our Solar System (ASTRO 1102/1104)	Spring 2020
• Teaching Assistant at Cornell University From New Worlds to Black Holes (ASTRO 1101/1103)	Fall 2019
• Teaching Assistant at Oberlin College Electricity, Magnetism, & Thermodynamics (PHYS 111)	Spring 2017
• Teaching Assistant at Oberlin College  Mechanics & Relativity (PHYS 110)	Fall 2016

#### MENTORING

Visiting Graduate Student Researcher Program, Caltech Mentee: Francesco Angelo Iraci	2025
Advancing Inclusive Mentoring (AIM) Program, CSU Long Beach & Carnegie Science Mentoring course & certification	2024
Astronomy Mentoring Program for Upcoming Postdocs (AMP-UP)  Mentee: Abby Lee, University of Chicago	2024
CASSI-SURF Summer Research Program, Caltech & Carnegie Observatories Mentee: Stephen Romero-Ruiz, Caltech	2024
Research Experiences for Undergraduates, Cornell University  Mentee: Taite Ellenson, Cornell University	2022
Mentee: Miranda Gorsuch, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point	2021
Mentee: Samantha Rosenfeld, Union College	2020

#### INVITED TALKS

- 1. Colloquium, Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (2025).
- 2. Colloquium, Anton Pannekoek Institute for Astronomy, University of Amsterdam (2025).
- 3. Colloquium, ASTRON Institute for Radio Astronomy (2025).
- 4. Colloquium, Institute for Theory and Computation, Harvard University (2025).
- 5. Observational Astronomy Seminar, CIERA, Northwestern University (2025).
- 6. Research Seminar, University of Chicago (2025).
- 7. FRB2024 Conference, Khao Lak, Thailand (2024).
- 8. Towards a Holistic Understanding of the Multi-scale, Multi-phase Circumgalactic Medium, Aspen Center for Physics (2024).
- 9. International Pulsar Timing Array Annual Conference, Haus-Sexten Center for Astrophysics (2024).
- 10. Fields, Flows, & Filaments Workshop, Stanford University (2024).
- 11. Astrophysics Lunch Seminar, UC Berkeley (2024).
- 12. KIPAC Tea, Stanford University (2024).
- 13. Astrophysics Division Seminar, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology (2023).
- 14. Salpeter Workshop on the Interstellar Medium, Cornell University (2023).
- 15. Astrophysics of Fast Radio Bursts II, Flatiron Institute (2023).
- 16. Physics & Astronomy Colloquium, Oberlin College (2023).
- 17. Special Session SH22C (Interstellar Probe), American Geophysical Union Conference (2022).
- 18. "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom" FRB Meeting, Cornell University (2022).
- 19. Colloquium, CSIRO Australia National Telescope Facility (2022).
- 20. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2022).
- 21. Breaking News Session, International Astronomical Union General Assembly Symposium: The Dawn of Cosmology & Multi-Messenger Studies with Fast Radio Bursts (2022).
- 22. Diffuse Ionized Gas Seminar, University of Washington, Seattle (2022).
- 23. FRB Seminar, Academia Sinica Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASIAA), Taiwan (2022).

- 24. Radio/mm/sub-mm Seminar, Caltech (2022).
- 25. Colloquium, Green Bank Observatory (2021).
- 26. Interstellar Probe Workshop, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University (2021).
- 27. Colloquium, Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy (ASTRON/JIVe; 2021).
- 28. CHIME/FRB Collaboration Journal Club (2021).

#### CONTRIBUTED TALKS AND POSTERS

- 1. Using Bow Shocks to Unveil the Structure of Neutron Star Winds. Talk. 18th Annual Bonn Neutron Star Workshop, Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (2025).
- 2. Constraining the Dissipation of VLISM Turbulence. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2025).
- 3. Pulsar Scintillation in the Interstellar Zoo. Talk. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Central Florida (2024).
- 4. Probing the Sun's Interstellar Environment from AU to 100s of Parsec Scales. Poster. American Geophysical Union Conference (2023).
- 5. Pulsar Scintillation through Thick and Thin. Talk. Scintillometry Workshop (2023).
- 6. The Path to a Next-Generation Galactic Electron Density Model. Talk. FRB2023 (2023).
- 7. A High-Resolution Study of Pulsar Scintillation. Talk. NANOGrav Fall Meeting (2023).
- 8. Mapping Small-Scale Structure in the ISM from Voyager to Nearby Pulsars. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2023).
- 9. A Search for Scintillation from Pulsar Bow Shocks. Talk. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2023).
- 10. Noise Considerations for Pulsar Science with DSA-2000. Scientific Frontiers and Synergies with the DSA-2000 Radio Camera. Poster. California Institute of Technology (2023).
- 11. Bow Shocks of Scintillating Pulsars. Talk. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2022).
- 12. Scattering Horizons for Fast Radio Bursts. Talk. International Astronomical Union General Assembly; Symposium: The Dawn of Cosmology & Multi-Messenger Studies with Fast Radio Bursts (2022).
- 13. Mapping the Local ISM From Voyager to Pulsars. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2022).
- 14. Scattering Horizons for Pulsars and Fast Radio Bursts. Poster. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2022).
- 15. An In Situ Study of Turbulence Near Stellar Bow Shocks. Talk. NANOGrav Fall Meeting (2021).
- 16. Turbulence Near Stellar Bow Shocks. Talk. Fall Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2021).
- 17. Leveraging the Combined Scattering and DM Budget. Talk. FRB2021 (2021).
- 18. Interstellar Propagation Effects Near and Far. Talk. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2021).
- 19. Voyager 1 Is Now an Interstellar Probe. Poster. KK Wang Cornell Space Tech Industry Day (2021).
- 20. Voyager 1 Detects Persistent Plasma Waves in Interstellar Space. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2021).
- 21. Interstellar Turbulence Near the Heliospheric Boundary. Talk. Fall Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2020).

- 22. Assessing Chromatic Arrival Time Perturbations for NANOGrav's Error Budget. Poster. 235th AAS Meeting (2020).
- 23. Multi-Frequency Scintillation Arc Study of Pulsar B1133+16. Poster. 233rd AAS Meeting (2019).
- 24. Multiple scintillation arcs in a nearby pulsar, B1133+16: crucial clues? Talk. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2017).
- 25. The effects of spatial smoothing on solar magnetic helicity and the hemispheric helicity sign rule. Poster. 47th AAS/Solar Physics Division Meeting (2016).

# PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

• Letters to a Pre-Scientist

• Caltech Astronomy on Tap

• Carnegie Observatories Open House

• Reddit Ask Me Anything, Voyager Interstellar Mission

• Journal Referee ApJ, Nature Astronomy, Nature Communications, MNRAS, A&A, Science China PMA	ongoing
• Observational Eras Committee, NANOGrav Collaboration Gathered materials on organizational structure of other collaborations; formulated recommend	2024– lations for
<ul> <li>reorganization of collaboration procedures</li> <li>Colloquium Committee, Carnegie Observatories         Invited speakers, organized talks     </li> </ul>	2024–
• Scientific Organizing Committee, FRB2024 Thailand  Drafted conference goals, reviewed abstracts, meeting schedule	2024
• German Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development: External Reviewer Evaluated grant proposals, provided written feedback	2024
• Hubble Space Telescope Allocation Committee: External Reviewer  Evaluated grant proposals, provided written feedback	2024
• Caltech Optical Observatories Time Allocation Committee Evaluated observing proposals, recommended time allocations, provided written feedback	2024
• NASA Review Panel Member Evaluated grant proposals	2023, 2024
• NANOGrav Climate & Equity Committee Member Contributor to NANOGrav Diversity Plan, annual climate survey, & DEI trainings for biannua collaboration meetings	2021–2023 l
• Peer Mentor Coordinator, Cornell Astronomy Graduate Network  Paired graduate student mentors and mentees; trained mentors; led group mentoring sessions	2021–2022
• President, Cornell Astronomy Graduate Network  Contributed to creation of Cornell Astronomy Graduate Student Handbook and the Astronomy  Mentoring Network	2020–2021 Peer
• Secretary & Outreach Coordinator, Cornell Astronomy Graduate Network  Organized the weekly graduate student and post-doc seminar; lead organizer of outreach events  graduate students (see Outreach section below)	2019–2020 s involving
• Student Representative, Oberlin College Department of Physics & Astronomy Attended all faculty meetings; led student committee for 2017 faculty search; organized weekly Women/Trans/Nonbinary in Physics Tea	2016–2018
Outreach	

2024-2025

2025

2024

2023

Public Talk, Cornell Astronomical Society	2023
• Contributing Writer, Ask an Astronomer: curious.astro.cornell.edu	2018–2023
Public Talk, Southern Maine Astronomers Organization	2022
Workshop Leader, Expanding Your Horizons, Cornell University	2019, 2021-2022
• Organizer, Museum in the Dark Event, Museum of the Earth, Ithaca NY	2019-2020
• Program Leader, 4-H Career Explorations, Cornell University	2019

# SELECTED MEDIA INTERVIEWS

• NPR: "The Voyager 1 spacecraft has a big glitch"	npr.org
• Vice News: "Flying 15 Billion Miles Away from Earth"	youtube.com
• NPR: "Planning for a space mission to last more than 50 years"	npr.org
• WKMG News 6 Space Curious Podcast: "How Big is the Solar System?"	podcasts.apple.com
• NBC: "NASA spacecraft detects a constant 'hum' deep in the cosmos"	nbcnews.com
• Gizmodo: "NASA's Voyager 1 Probe Detects the Steady 'Hum'"	gizmodo.com
• NASA: "Voyager 1's Density Measurements are Making Waves"	nasa.gov
• AASNova: "What Fast Radio Bursts Tell Us About Galaxy Halos"	aasnova.org