Stella Koch Ocker

CURRICULUM VITAE

Website: stellakochocker.com Email: socker@caltech.edu Orcid: 0000-0002-4941-5333 Citizenship: USA, Germany

EDUCATION

Cornell University

M.S., Ph.D. in Astronomy

Advisor: Prof. James Cordes

Thesis Title: "Characterizing Cosmic Plasmas from the Heliosphere to Distant Galaxies"

Oberlin College

B.A. with High Honors in Physics (Concentration in Astrophysics)

Ithaca, NY

August 2023

Oberlin, OH

Oberlin College

Oberlin, OH

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. 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
- 14. 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
- 15. 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
- 16. 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
- 17. 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
- 18. 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
- 19. 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
- 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

- 21. 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
- 22. 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
- 23. 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
- 24. 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
- 25. 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
- 26. 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
- 27. 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
- 28. 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
- 29. 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
- 30. 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
- 31. 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
- 32. 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.
- 33. 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.
- 34. 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
- 35. 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
- 36. 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
- 37. 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
- 38. 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

AFFILIATIONS

 Pulsar Science Working Group, Square Kilometer Array Observatory (SKAO) 	2024-
 North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav) 	2019-
Voyager Interstellar Mission	2020-
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

• Python Programming Workshop at Cornell University <i>Research Experiences for Undergraduates</i>	Summer 2021
• Head Teaching Assistant 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	2024
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	

Kesearch Experiences for Undergraduates, Cornell University

Mentee: Taite Ellenson, Cornell University2022Mentee: Miranda Gorsuch, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point2021Mentee: Samantha Rosenfeld, Union College2020

INVITED TALKS

- 1. Colloquium, Institute for Theory and Computation, Harvard University (2025).
- 2. Observational Astronomy Seminar, CIERA, Northwestern University (2025).
- 3. Research Seminar, University of Chicago (2025).
- 4. FRB2024 Conference, Khao Lak, Thailand (2024).
- 5. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Central Florida (2024).
- 6. Towards a Holistic Understanding of the Multi-scale, Multi-phase Circumgalactic Medium, Aspen Center for Physics (2024).
- 7. International Pulsar Timing Array Annual Conference, Haus-Sexten Center for Astrophysics (2024).
- 8. Fields, Flows, & Filaments Workshop, Stanford University (2024).
- 9. Astrophysics Lunch Seminar, UC Berkeley (2024).
- 10. KIPAC Tea, Stanford University (2024).
- 11. Astrophysics Division Seminar, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology (2023).
- 12. Salpeter Workshop on the Interstellar Medium, Cornell University (2023).
- 13. Astrophysics of Fast Radio Bursts II, Flatiron Institute (2023).
- 14. Physics & Astronomy Colloquium, Oberlin College (2023).
- 15. Special Session SH22C (*Interstellar Probe*), American Geophysical Union Conference (2022).
- 16. "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom" FRB Meeting, Cornell University (2022).
- 17. Colloquium, CSIRO Australia National Telescope Facility (2022).
- 18. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2022).
- 19. Breaking News Session, International Astronomical Union General Assembly Symposium: The Dawn of Cosmology & Multi-Messenger Studies with Fast Radio Bursts (2022).
- 20. Diffuse Ionized Gas Seminar, University of Washington, Seattle (2022).
- 21. FRB Seminar, Academia Sinica Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASIAA), Taiwan (2022).
- 22. Radio/mm/sub-mm Seminar, Caltech (2022).
- 23. Colloquium, Green Bank Observatory (2021).
- 24. Interstellar Probe Workshop, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University (2021).
- 25. Colloquium, Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy (ASTRON/JIVe; 2021).
- 26. CHIME/FRB Collaboration Journal Club (2021).

CONTRIBUTED TALKS AND POSTERS

- 1. Constraining the Dissipation of VLISM Turbulence. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2025).
- 2. Probing the Sun's Interstellar Environment from AU to 100s of Parsec Scales. Poster. American Geophysical Union Conference (2023).

- 3. Pulsar Scintillation through Thick and Thin. Talk. Scintillometry Workshop (2023).
- 4. The Path to a Next-Generation Galactic Electron Density Model. Talk. FRB2023 (2023).
- 5. A High-Resolution Study of Pulsar Scintillation. Talk. NANOGrav Fall Meeting (2023).
- 6. Mapping Small-Scale Structure in the ISM from Voyager to Nearby Pulsars. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2023).
- 7. A Search for Scintillation from Pulsar Bow Shocks. Talk. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2023).
- 8. Noise Considerations for Pulsar Science with DSA-2000. Scientific Frontiers and Synergies with the DSA-2000 Radio Camera. Poster. California Institute of Technology (2023).
- 9. Bow Shocks of Scintillating Pulsars. Talk. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2022).
- 10. 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).
- 11. Mapping the Local ISM From Voyager to Pulsars. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2022).
- 12. Scattering Horizons for Pulsars and Fast Radio Bursts. Poster. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2022).
- 13. An In Situ Study of Turbulence Near Stellar Bow Shocks. Talk. NANOGrav Fall Meeting (2021).
- 14. Turbulence Near Stellar Bow Shocks. Talk. Fall Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2021).
- 15. Leveraging the Combined Scattering and DM Budget. Talk. FRB2021 (2021).
- 16. Interstellar Propagation Effects Near and Far. Talk. NANOGrav Spring Meeting (2021).
- 17. Voyager 1 Is Now an Interstellar Probe. Poster. KK Wang Cornell Space Tech Industry Day (2021).
- 18. Voyager 1 Detects Persistent Plasma Waves in Interstellar Space. Talk. Spring Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2021).
- 19. Interstellar Turbulence Near the Heliospheric Boundary. Talk. Fall Meeting of the Voyager Interstellar Mission Science Steering Group (2020).
- 20. Assessing Chromatic Arrival Time Perturbations for NANOGrav's Error Budget. Poster. 235th AAS Meeting (2020).
- 21. Multi-Frequency Scintillation Arc Study of Pulsar B1133+16. Poster. 233rd AAS Meeting (2019).
- 22. Multiple scintillation arcs in a nearby pulsar, B1133+16: crucial clues? Talk. Scintillometry Workshop, University of Toronto (2017).
- 23. 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

• Journal Referee ongoing ApJ, Nature Astronomy, Nature Communications, MNRAS, A&A, Science China PMA

• Observational Eras Committee, NANOGrav Collaboration 2024— Gathered materials on organizational structure of other collaborations; formulated recommendations for reorganization of collaboration procedures

• Colloquium Committee, Carnegie Observatories Invited speakers, organized talks 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	2023, 2024
 Evaluated grant proposals NANOGrav Climate & Equity Committee Member 	2021–2023
Contributor to NANOGrav Diversity Plan, annual climate survey, & DEI trainings for biannu collaboration meetings	al
• 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	2020-2021
Contributed to creation of Cornell Astronomy Graduate Student Handbook and the Astronomy Mentoring Network	y Peer
• Secretary & Outreach Coordinator, Cornell Astronomy Graduate Network Organized the weekly graduate student and post-doc seminar; lead organizer of outreach even	2019–2020 ats involving
 graduate students (see Outreach section below) Student Representative, Oberlin College Department of Physics & Astronomy 	2016–2018
Attended all faculty meetings; led student committee for 2017 faculty search; organized weekly Women/Trans/Nonbinary in Physics Tea	
Outreach	
• Letters to a Pre-Scientist	2024-2025
Caltech Astronomy on Tap	2024
 Reddit Ask Me Anything, Voyager Interstellar Mission 	2024
Carnegie Observatories Open House	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 20	19, 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
·	asts.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