

## ***A Warm Hello from Our Community***

We hope this spring semester has been great for everyone!

In this first issue of our LGBTQ+SA newsletter, you will find **useful resources**, a **spotlight on LGBTQ+ scientists and innovators**, **introductions from our group's student leaders**, and **snapshots of our year so far**.

We look forward to sharing this space with our fellow GSBS students and to meeting everyone at one of our upcoming events.

### **Our mission as the LGBTQ+ Student Alliance is:**

- to serve the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students at GSBS.
- to foster community among LGBTQ+ students and straight students.

**ALL GSBS students  
are welcome!**

### ***Upcoming Events***

#### **LGBTQ+SA Meet & Greet**

Come hang out with us and get to know our officers and about our organization! We promise treats and a nice break from lab. :)

**Date and location TBD.**

### ***Scholarship Opportunities***

#### **Out To Innovate Scholarship**

The Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience awards \$2,000 to LGBTQIA+ students who promote academic excellence and visibility. Applications open in April 2026.

### ***Spotlight***

#### **Ben Barres (1954–2017)**

Barres was an American neuroscientist, who revolutionized understanding of glial cells and became the first openly transgender scientist elected to the National Academy of Sciences. He used his platform to advocate for equity in science, and his legacy is captured in his memoir *The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist*.



Stanford Medicine (2017)

### ***Health Resources***

#### **The Montrose Center**

Provides counseling, education, and support groups for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families.

#### **Ethos Endocrinology**

Specializes in transgender medicine and hormone therapy.

*If there is someone or something you would like to see featured here, please share it by emailing us at [gsbs.lgbtqsa@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:gsbs.lgbtqsa@uth.tmc.edu).*

# MEET OUR OFFICERS



president

Hello! I am **John Sanchez**. I am a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD candidate in Dr. Deepa Sampath's Lab. I am a part of the Therapeutics and Pharmacology program, and I am always happy to offer help and advice to incoming students. When I am not in the lab, I am usually spending time with my puppy Rex, playing video games, or attending indie rock concerts! I can't wait to meet everyone in person!

**JRSanchez@mdanderson.org**

Hi everyone! I'm **Jamie Tran**. I'm currently a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD student in Dr. Karmouty-Quintana's lab where we focus on diseases involving fibrosis, vascular remodeling, and alternative polyadenylation. In my spare time I enjoy dog training for lunch money, wandering around farmer's markets, and singing in the car. I am dedicated to supporting and building our community and look forward to meeting everyone!

**Jamie.Tran@uth.tmc.edu**



vice  
president



student  
rep

Hi! I am **Gemalene (Gema) Sunga**, a 5<sup>th</sup> year Immunology PhD candidate in the labs of Drs. Simon Young and Andrew Sikora. Outside of lab, I love to bake and cook; absorb movies, music, and books; dabble in sculpting, drawing, and photography; and take in all the great art around Houston! I am passionate about community-building and advocacy, and I look forward to connecting and supporting you however I can!

**Gemalene.Sunga@uth.tmc.edu**

# M O M E N T S **AROUND GSBS**

## **OPEN MIC NIGHT**

At this event last September, co-hosted with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), we kicked off the new academic year with a quiet evening of artistic expression and community. Gema shared this poem by the late queer poet Mary Oliver as an important message for us all as graduate students:



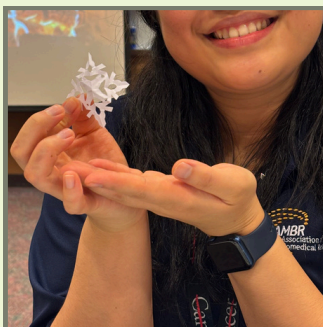
**Wild Geese**

Mary Oliver

*You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.*

## **WINTER SOCIAL**

Last December, we joined all GSBS student orgs to ring in the holiday season at the annual winter social, making paper snowflakes and chains for festive decor.



Contact us at [gsbs.lgbtqsa@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:gsbs.lgbtqsa@uth.tmc.edu) to be added to our e-mail list to hear about future events or to learn how you can get involved!