The Sharon Dunwoody Science Journalism Mentoring Program

2023 Cohort

We’re pleased to introduce the participants in the inaugural cohort of the Sharon Dunwoody Science Journalism Mentoring Program (a few more mentees will join the cohort later this summer). This program is made possible at no cost to participants, thanks to support from Science Sandbox, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and individual donations from the TON community.

Meet the 2023 Mentee Cohort

Britny Cordera is a published poet, nonfiction writer, and emerging journalist who investigates the intersections between environment, climate change, and (pop) culture. Currently, she is an intern at St. Louis Public Radio. Britny’s work can be found in Grist’s Fix, The New Territory, Atmos, Next City, and Nexus Media News. She received her MFA from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. When she is not reporting, or writing poetry, Britny teaches for the St. Louis Poetry Center and roller skates in her free time. Find her on Twitter @becordera.

Jose Fermoso covers road safety, transportation, and public health for The Oaklandside. His previous work covering tech and culture has appeared in publications including The Guardian, The New York Times, and One Zero. Jose was born and raised in Oakland and is the host and creator of the El Progreso podcast, an Apple Podcasts-featured show featuring in-depth narrative stories and interviews about and from the perspective of the Latinx community. Find him on Twitter @fermoso.

Annika Hom is an inequality reporter for the award-winning nonprofit news site Mission Local. Annika got her first dose of health reporting covering COVID-19’s disproportionate effects on Latinos and Black San Franciscans. Since then, she’s covered housing, health, and features, through an inequality and social determinants of health lens. She’s also a three-year Report for America corps member, has been selected as a USC Annenberg health fellowship twice, and has had work appear in USA Today, Harvard Public Health Magazine, and more. She loves lounging in parks and piling up iced coffees in her room. Find her on Twitter @AnnikaHom.
**Shihab Jamal** grew up in Sana’a, Yemen, where he currently lives with his family, and graduated from the mass communication college in Future University. Over time, he developed a deep interest in the earth sciences, natural history and climate sciences. In 2021, Shihab joined the National Association of Science Writers, where he gained knowledge that helped him start writing for Nature Careers. Now, Shihab is a freelance science writer with five years of experience. He believes that being a science writer is to deal with science not just through writing but as a lifestyle, driven by a sense of responsibility toward the planet and prosperity and committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. In his free time, he likes to hike and play video games with his little brother. Find him on Twitter @ShihabJamal4.

**Maya L. Kapoor** is an award-winning journalist who covers climate change, biodiversity, and environmental justice. She has recent or forthcoming writing in *Grist, Harper’s, High Country News,* and *Undark.* She previously ran the journalism minor at North Carolina State University. Before that Maya oversaw coverage of the Southwestern U.S. for *High Country News,* where she also edited features, reportage, essays, interviews, and reviews. Maya has mentored early-career writers through *The Open Notebook* and the AAAS Mass Media Fellowship. She is currently on the steering committee of The Uproot Project and was previously on the board of the Society of Environmental Journalists. Learn more at mayalkapoor.com. Find her on Twitter @kapoor_ml.

**Karen Kwon** is the associate editor of *Optics & Photonics News* and a freelance journalist. She holds a master’s degree in journalism from the Science, Health & Environmental Reporting Program at New York University and a PhD in chemistry from Columbia University. She was also a 2020 AAAS Mass Media Fellow at Scientific American. Her words have appeared in *Scientific American, Slate, Inside Science, IEEE Spectrum,* and more. Originally from Seoul, South Korea, she now lives in Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC, with her drummer husband and a cat named Mailbox. Find her on Twitter @ykarenkwon.

**Koby Levin** is a science reporter for *Outlier Media* in Detroit, where he reports science stories within *Outlier’s* primary beats of housing, utilities and transportation—helping Detroiters connect to the wonder and joy that comes from understanding the city around them. Koby spent the last five years covering education in Detroit for *Chalkbeat.* He previously worked for the *Joplin Globe* and the New England Center for Investigative Reporting. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College. Find him on Twitter @levin_koby.
**Andrew Meissen** is a New York City-based freelance science writer. Before becoming a journalist, he worked in neuroscience labs studying creativity and consciousness at Northwestern University and New York University. His work has appeared in publications such as BrainFacts.org, Photonics Focus, and Drug Discovery News. Find him on Twitter @AndrewMeissen.

**Maria de los Ángeles Orfila** is a Uruguayan journalist with more than 18 years of experience in journalism. She currently works as a journalist for the national newspaper *El País*. She has been responsible for editing and coordinating the Vivir section since June 2019 and Revista Domingo since December 2019. This includes the topics of science and technology, environment, health, and trends. In 2007 she received a scholarship to participate in the 4th Jack F. Ealy Workshop on Scientific Journalism at the University of San Diego–California; and in 2013 she received a scholarship to participate in the Smart Cities course of the International Center for Journalists and the Inter-American Development Bank. In 2012 she won the Siemens Latin American Journalism Award for the article “Energy Efficiency Is Still a Dream for Montevideo.” Find her on Twitter @orfilamaria.

**Roxanne Scott** is a journalist in Queens, New York. Prior to returning to New York, she was a reporter at public radio stations in Atlanta and Louisville, Kentucky. During her seven years in newsrooms, she’s covered a variety of topics including how climate change affects residents of color in Queens, disparities in gifted and talented enrollment in Kentucky, and the spread of COVID in ICE detention centers in Georgia. Roxanne is a 2022 Center for Health Journalism Data Fellow. In 2018, she was awarded a travel grant from the Pulitzer Center to report on food and global health in Nigeria. In 2015, she was an International Women’s and Media Foundation fellow where she got to report in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Roxanne likes using public records and data to report local stories. She is a graduate of the CUNY School of Journalism. Find her on Twitter @WhosWorld.

**Helina Selemono** is a health and science journalist for The Blacklight, an investigative unit for the *New York Amsterdam News* where she reports on COVID-19, climate change, and public health responses to gun violence. She previously worked in audience development and engagement for the health & science team at The Associated Press. Helina is also an experienced news researcher and trainer, having worked with the Ida B. Wells Society, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. As a freelancer, Helina contributed to reporting or fact-checking for health and science publications such as *Popular Science*, *Spectrum*, *The Trace*, *GastroEndo News*, and the WBAI (New York) show Healthstyles. Find her on Twitter @heyhelina.
Syris Valentine is a Seattle-based freelance writer who focuses on climate change and climate justice. Their work has appeared in *Grist*, *YES! Magazine*, *Daily Dot*, *The Urbanist*, and the *South Seattle Emerald*. With a deep passion for writing and literature, they recently launched *Everyday Writer* as an online resource to help beginning creative writers to own their stories and make their words work. When they're not writing, you can find Syris kicking around a soccer ball, wandering the stacks of a nearby library or bookstore, or having hot debates about climate action with friends. Find them on Twitter [@ShaperSyris](https://twitter.com/ShaperSyris).

Ananya is a freelance science writer, journalist, and translator with an extensive research background in robotics. She covers all things algorithms, robots, oceans, urban issues, and the people involved in these fields. Since 2018, she has also worked with the ongoing podcast *Talking Machines*, which traces the developments in and social impacts of machine learning and AI. Ananya translates fiction and nonfiction between English and Kannada. She divides her time between Mangalore and Bangalore, and enjoys learning the names of trees, trying new snacks, and solving puzzles. Find her on Twitter [@punarpuli](https://twitter.com/punarpuli).

Meet the 2023 Mentor Cohort

Katharine Gammon is a freelance journalist based in Santa Monica, California who writes about environment and science topics for *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, and other national publications. Her work has twice received honorable mentions in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing* and she has taught journalism at USC's Annenberg School. You can find her on Twitter [@kategammon](https://twitter.com/kategammon).

Lauren Gravitz is a science writer and editor based in San Diego, California. She is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in *STAT News*, *Scientific American*, *The Washington Post*, *NPR*, *Aeon*, and a variety of other national and international publications. When she’s editing she wants to be writing, when she’s writing she wants to be editing, and at the end of the day the craft keeps her coming back to both. You can find her on Twitter [@lyrebard](https://twitter.com/lyrebard).
Erika Hayasaki is a writer based in Southern California whose feature stories appear in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Wired*, *The Atlantic*, and others. She is the author of *The Death Class* (Simon & Schuster) and *Somewhere Sisters* (Algonquin), which was named an NPR Best Book of the Year and received a 2023 *Nautilus* Book Award in “Journalism and Investigative Reporting.” A former national correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, she now teaches at the University of California, Irvine, in the Literary Journalism Program. She has been a Knight-Wallace Reporting Fellow, working on a project about Black and Asian American intersections and histories, and an Alicia Patterson Fellow in science and environmental reporting. Her work has also been recognized by the Association of Sunday Feature Editors, the Society for Features Journalism, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Longform’s Best of Science writing of 2016 and 2017, as well as in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing* book series of 2019 and 2022. You can find her on Twitter @ErikaHayasaki.

Jyoti Madhusoodanan is a science journalist based in Portland, Oregon. She covers the life sciences, health, and the intersection of research and medicine for *Undark*, *Nature*, *Scientific American*, and other outlets. You can find her on Twitter @smjyoti.

Amy Mayer began her science writing career decades ago with short quirky stories about Alaska for *The Weather Notebook*, a daily 2-minute radio segment. She has worked in public media around the country, including 8 years as the agriculture reporter at Iowa Public Radio. Amy has also written for *The New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, *NPR*, and *BioScience*. She’s interviewed leading researchers working in the Arctic and Antarctic and many latitudes in between. In 2022, Amy spent two months onboard the research vessel JOIDES Resolution sharing the adventures and discoveries of a team of paleoclimatologists through onboard outreach and journalism. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. You can find her on Twitter @AmyHMayer.

Czerne M. Reid, is an instructional associate professor in the University of Florida department of psychiatry, and affiliate associate professor in the UF department of journalism. She earned a PhD in environmental chemistry at Emory University, and a graduate certificate in science communication at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her bachelor's degree in chemistry is from the University of the West Indies, Mona, in her native Jamaica. She co-chairs the National Association of Science Writers Education Committee and serves on the board of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. She has worked as a science writer and reporter at *The State* newspaper, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *The Salinas Californian*, and news offices at Stanford and UF Health. She has served as a contributing
editor for Science News, and published in National Geographic, Nature, and other outlets. Honors include Exemplary Teacher Awards from the UF College of Medicine, and the Diane McGurgan Service Award from NASW. You can find her on Twitter @CzernerReid.

Priyanka Runwal is a freelance science, health, and environment journalist from India based in New York City. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Scientific American, National Geographic, Science News, STAT, Audubon, Hakai Magazine, among other publications. She also dabbles in data journalism as a freelance reporter for Climate Central. Previously, Priyanka covered the COVID-19 pandemic as a science resident at National Geographic. She is a graduate of the UC, Santa Cruz science communication program and an ecologist by training in her former life. You can find her on Twitter @priyanka_runwal.

Kamala Thiagarajan is an independent journalist based in Madurai, South India, where she reports on environmental issues, global health, development, and science. She has over twenty years of reporting experience and her work has been published in global media outlets, including The New York Times, BBC, The Guardian, NPR, Hakai Magazine, Ensia, The British Medical Journal, Bloomberg News, Al Jazeera, South China Morning Post, and many others. She is the recipient of the 2023 Pulitzer grant for an under-reported story on India's female seaweed divers and the hardships they face. You can find her on Twitter @Kamal_t.

Lindzi Wessel is a freelance journalist and science writer. She writes about all things science and health, including the international politics that affect how research is conducted and translated into policy. Her work has run the gamut from nerdy dives into the molecular systems that make our bodies work to investigative reporting on sexual harassment and threats against scientists. She was co-director of the 2023 Symposium to Advance Science Communication and Journalism in Chile (abbreviated SAPeCCT for its name in Spanish), which took place in Santiago. You can find her on Twitter @LindziWessel.

Ashley Yeager is a writer, editor, and multimedia producer, focusing on science. Currently, she is the associate news editor at Science News and has worked at The Scientist, the Simons Foundation, Duke University and the W.M. Keck Observatory. She has a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a master’s degree in science writing from MIT. Her first book, Bright Galaxies, Dark Matter and Beyond, on the life of astronomer Vera Rubin, was published by MIT Press in August 2021. You can subscribe to her newsletter on heart health or find her on Twitter @AshleyJYeager.
Lauren J. Young is a science journalist and associate health editor at *Scientific American*. She’s edited and written stories that tackle a wide range of subjects, such as medicine and healthcare, health inequities, environmental justice, conservation, and more. Before joining *Scientific American*, Lauren was an associate editor at *Popular Science* and a digital producer at public radio’s *Science Friday*. She studied biology at Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo before pursuing a master’s at New York University’s Science, Health, and Environmental Reporting Program. Lauren is currently based in New York City, but proudly hails from the San Joaquin Valley of California. You can find her on Twitter [@laurenjyoung617](https://twitter.com/laurenjyoung617).

Katarina Zimmer is a Germany-based freelance journalist writing for publications including *Undark*, *Knowable Magazine*, *Scientific American*, *National Geographic*, and more. She mainly covers life science and environmental issues. You can find her on Twitter [@katarinazimmer](https://twitter.com/katarinazimmer).

**Program Directors**

Siri Carpenter (*The Open Notebook* co-founder and editor-in-chief) is an award-winning science journalist and editor whose writing and editorial work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Science*, *Discover*, *Scientific American*, *bioGraphic*, *Science News*, *Science News for Students*, and many other publications. She has a PhD in psychology from Yale University and began her science-writing career as a AAAS Mass Media Fellow. She is a past president of the National Association of Science Writers (2018-2020). She lives in Madison, Wisconsin. You can find her on Twitter [@SiriCarpenter](https://twitter.com/SiriCarpenter).

Sandee Ravindran is a freelance science journalist based in Bethesda, Maryland. He has written about life sciences and technology for publications such as *Time*, *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic* News, *The Scientist*, *Nature*, and *Wired*. He is Vice President of the National Association of Science Writers and is a lecturer in the Johns Hopkins MA in Science Writing program. He holds a PhD in microbiology and immunology from Stanford University and studied science communication at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is originally from South India, and enjoys finding new Indian dishes to cook for his six-year-old daughter. You can find him on Twitter [@sandeeprtweets](https://twitter.com/sandeeprtweets).
About Sharon Dunwoody

Sharon Dunwoody (1947-2022) was one of the U.S.’s preeminent scholars of science and environmental journalism, the first woman to serve as director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and a mentor to legions of students and science writers across the world. Sharon embodied inclusion, never hesitating to welcome and assist colleagues, students, scientists, and virtually everyone with whom she crossed paths. She was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and served as a member and president of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research and the Association for Education in Journalism in Mass Communication. She was a prolific scholar of science communication for public audiences and earned scores of accolades and awards. She also co-founded UW–Madison’s long-running Science Journalist in Residence Program, which along with a host of other journalist-in-residence programs at the school where she spent the majority of her career, now bears her name. Sharon was a longtime friend to The Open Notebook and is deeply missed.