is to keep LGBT people in STEM careers and to provide someone for students to talk to if they feel that they cannot discuss their personal lives with their advisers, says Rochelle Diamond, who is the chair of the NOGLSTP's board of directors and manages two labs at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena.

LGBT MOBILITY

Changes to marriage laws in some countries may influence acceptance of LGBT people in society at large, and improve the prospects of scientists looking for the right department fit (see *Nature* **454,** 132–133; 2008). In the United States, for example, there is still a patchwork of state laws that forbid same-sex marriage. But last June, the US Supreme Court declared that the section of the Defense of Marriage Act that prohibited federal recognition of same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. That may boost the immigration of LGBT scientists, who can now sponsor foreign-born spouses for permanent-resident status. It can also help US-based researchers and their spouses. Rigby and her wife and child are now on the same insurance plan; combined with other benefits that are now permitted, they may save several thousand dollars this year.

At conferences, Carolyn Brinkworth, an astronomer at the Infrared Processing and Analysis Center at Caltech, wears a rainbow sticker with the words 'Safe Space', or a badge from an LGBT youth organization for which she volunteers. Young scientists have approached her to say that they have not felt comfortable being out at work. "It's rare that they tell me the climate is hostile," she says. More often, she says, these researchers do not want to think about introducing a potential new source of work stress by coming out, or are not sure how their advisers or peers will react to their identity.

But Chan has found that being out proved better not only on a personal level, but also on a professional one. A volunteer for the American Chemical Society (ACS), Chan discussed being gay in an ACS publication after his tenure decision. Later he received multiple e-mails from colleagues whom he knew from ACS meetings. Most were e-mails of support, but one colleague also asked him about his single-crystal X-ray diffractometer. The two have now collaborated on multiple papers.

And at an LGBT reception at an ACS meeting, Chan also met a researcher who may host his sabbatical. "Being out has really helped me," he says. "It frees you up to think of your research, and your scholarship." ■

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TURNING POINT
Eleni Antoniadou

PhD student Eleni Antoniadou co-founded the London-based start-up Transplants Without Donors in 2009 to develop tissue-engineered organs. Antoniadou, who also blogs for The Huffington Post*, was shortlisted in September in the science category of the 2013 Women of the Future Awards, Britain's industry-funded search for successful early-career women.*

What led you to tissue engineering?
I was working at a hospital as an undergraduate and saw that prosthetics had limitations. I wanted to do research that could give patients something better. I found regenerative medicine and tissue engineering to be promising fields.

What was your first tissue-engineering project?
While studying for a master's in nanotechnology and regenerative medicine at University College London, I worked on neural generation — testing biomaterials that could become artificial nerves. I also got involved in developing a business plan for an artificial trachea. I felt overwhelmed when it was successfully received by a patient. It was proof that tissue engineering could be applied in clinical practice.

So you launched the start-up soon afterwards?
While in London, I joined several physicians and scientists to co-found Transplants Without Donors so that we could work on tissue-engineering scaffolds for several different organs. In launching this company, I came to appreciate the complexity of the science behind tissue engineering. In 2010, after receiving a scholarship from the Fulbright Program and the Institute of International Education, I came to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to get a master's in bioengineering, with a focus on developing artificial skin. This is challenging, yet is a product that many patients need.

What has been the start-up's main challenge?
Securing financial support. But it was also challenging to find people with the appropriate multidisciplinary background. We had to learn how to design experiments so that all the scientists on our 25-member team could contribute to and understand them. We are hoping that the products we launch next year — mostly tissue-engineering scaffolds and bioreactors for different organs — will be used by other researchers. Sharing products throughout labs could really help to move the field forward.

You spent time at NASA recently. How did that influence your research?
I was beginning a PhD at the University of Illinois when the European Space Agency and NASA selected me to work at the biosciences division of NASA's centre for nanotechology for several months. That was a turning point in my career: it was the most innovative place I'd ever been. I saw the importance of tackling big, risky projects.

How did you start blogging for *The Huffington Post*?
After being nominated for the award, I was invited to write for the blog to raise awareness of the future of technology and of women in science. So far, I've written about the future of tissue-engineered organs and the importance of space exploration. Thanks to my posts, I've had scientists approach me to collaborate on projects and heard from people who are curious about tissue engineering.

Name a pivotal moment in your career.
In the past few years, I've been to Peru and Costa Rica to volunteer with the Foundation for the International Medical Relief of Children, a non-profit organization based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that sends out teams to perform operations or offer health care. We gave vaccinations and pharmaceuticals to sick kids, including those victimized by the illegal organ trade. It was really fulfilling and has helped to drive everything we do in the lab.

What do you plan to do after you get your PhD?
I would like to do research in the lab, working full-time at Transplants Without Donors to bring products to market. We need to develop a legislative framework for tissue-engineering products — one that will be universal. ■

INTERVIEW BY VIRGINIA GEWIN