William J Fefferman

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Date: November 2025

Positions

7.2025- Present	Associate Professor Department of Computer Science, University of Chicago
2.2022- present	Senior Associate (by courtesy) Kadanoff Center for Theoretical Physics, Department of Physics, University of Chicago
7.2019- 7.2025	Assistant Professor Department of Computer Science, University of Chicago

Education

Pн.D in Computer Science, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA

- Advisors: Alexei Kitaev and Christopher Umans
- Committee: Venkat Chandrasekaran, Alexei Kitaev, John Preskill, Christopher Umans
- M.S in Computer Science, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA
 B.S in Computer Science, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
 B.A in Mathematics, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Postdoctoral Positions

Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS), University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

• Advisor: Umesh Vazirani

Quantum Information and Computer Science (QuICS), University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies (UMIACS), University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Awards

2022 Google Research Scholar Award

• Proposal title: "Understanding the feasibility of practical applications from quantum supremacy experiments"

National Science Foundation CAREER award

- Proposal title: "Near-term quantum computing: achieving quantum advantage, and next steps"
- AWARD NUMBER: CCF- 2044923 (CAREER)

Air Force Young Investigator Award from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research

- Proposal title: "Characterizing the Power of Experimentally Feasible Quantum Computation with Applications to Rigorous Security Guarantees for Quantum-safe Cryptography"
- Young Investigator Award: FA9550-18-1-0148.

Service

2018

• <i>Co-chair, Steering Committee</i> , Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC)
 Program committee member, 29th Annual Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2026)
Associate Editor, ACM Transactions on Quantum Computing Journal
• <i>Program chair</i> , 20th Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC 2025)
 Program committee member, 28th Annual Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2025)
 Chair, Quantum Algorithms workshop, Statistical Methods and Mathematical Analysis for Quantum Information Science Program, Institute for Mathematical and Statistical Innovation, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
• Committee Member, IBM/UChicago/University of Tokyo Quantum Initiative, Technical Committee (one of three UChicago faculty on joint committee for 10 year, \$100 million quantum computing initiative)
• <i>Chair</i> , Quantum Complexity workshop, Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
• <i>Co-chair</i> , Near-term quantum computers workshop, Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

2024

Program committee member, Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science Conference (ITCS 2024)

Summer 2023 • *Chair*, Quantum Summer Cluster Workshop, Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

Summer 2023 • *Program organizer*, Summer Cluster on Quantum Computing, Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

2.22.2023 2.24.2023 Organizing committee member, Winter School on Contemporary Quantum Algorithms and Applications, Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IPAM), University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

2023

• *Program committee member*, 26th Annual Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2023)

8.1.2022-8.3.2022 Chair, NSF Workshop on Quantum Advantage and Next Steps, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

2022

• *Program committee member*, 17th Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC 2022)

2022

• Program committee member, Quantum Computing Theory in Practice, (QCTIP 2022)

2022

Program committee member, 25th Annual Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2022)

2021

• *Program committee member*, 16th Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC 2021)

2021

Program committee member, 24th Annual Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2021)

7.26.2020-7.31.2020 Co-chair, Dagstuhl Workshop on "Quantum Complexity: Theory and Application", Dagstuhl, Germany.

Co-chair of international workshop on quantum computation and near-term quantum applications at the Dagstuhl conference center for computer science, Dagstuhl, Germany.

8.1-8.5.2016

• *Chair*, QuICS Workshop on QMA(2) and the Complexity of Entanglement, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

Organized an international workshop at QuICS on the computational power of quantum entanglement.

Selected Press Articles

• "The Quest to Quantify Quantumness", Quanta Magazine, October 19, 2023: link

- "In New Paradox, Black Holes Appear to Evade Heat Death", Quanta Magazine, June 6, 2023: link
- "New Algorithm Closes Quantum Supremacy Window", Quanta Magazine, January 9, 2023: link
- "Computer Scientists Eliminate Pesky Quantum Computations", Quanta Magazine, January 19, 2022: link
- "Quantum Supremacy Is Coming: Here's What You Should Know", Quanta Magazine, July 18, 2019: link
- "Why haven't we got useful quantum computers yet?", New Scientist, September 5, 2023: link
- "Berkeley computer theorists show path to verifying that quantum beats classical", UC Berkeley News, October 29, 2018: link
- "UChicago Scientists Make New Discovery Proving Entanglement Is Responsible for Computational Hardness In Quantum Systems", UChicago CS Department News, July 25, 2023: link

Invited Tutorials

2.4.2023

6.17.2020

11.18.2025

9.9.2025

6.5.2025

3.17.2025

Invited Tutorial, 5 lecture mini-course on modern topics in quantum computing (one out of nine lecturers), Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, hosted at Park City Math Institute, Park City, Utah
 Invited Tutorial (one of out five invited tutorial speakers), Winter School on Con-

Invited Tutorial (one of out five invited tutorial speakers), Winter School on Contemporary Quantum Algorithms and Applications, Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IPAM), University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

• Invited Tutorial (one of four invited tutorial speakers for three hour talk at the yearly conference), QIP 2023 conference, Ghent, Belgium

Invited Tutorial, Los Alamos Quantum Computing Summer School, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico (virtual)

Selected Invited Talks (since 2020)

• Google Quantum CS Seminar (virtual seminar), Google Quantum AI group, CA.

• Conference on Quantum Many-body Physics through the Lens of Quantum Error Correction, Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, Santa Barbara, CA

 Quantum Interactive Dynamics Workshop III, Physics Department, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

• APS Global Physics Summit 2025 (invited talk), Annaheim, CA.

• University of Maryland QuICS 10th Anniversary Symposium, University of Mary-1.23.2025 land, College Park, MD. · University of Minnesota Quantum Computer Seminar, University of Minnesota, 10.22.2024 Minneapolis, MN. • National Quantum Initiative Joint Algorithms Workshop, University of New Mexico, 5.20.2024 Albuquerque, NM. • UmeshFest (in celebration of Umesh Vazirani's 64th birthday), Simons Institute, Uni-4.27.2024 versity of California, Berkeley, CA. • Physics Department Colloquium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. 3.13.2024 • IQIM Seminar, Caltech, Pasadena, CA. 2.23.2024 • Princeton Quantum Colloquium, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. 2.12.2024 • Simons Institute, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA. 2.5.2024 • National Institute of Informatics (Japan), Shonan Meeting No.198 "New Directions 12.11.2023 in Provable Quantum Advantages", Shonan Village Center, Kanagawa, Japan. Workshop on Many-body Quantum Systems via Classical and Quantum Computa-11.9.2023 tion, Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IPAM), University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA • Southwest Quantum Information and Technology Conference (SQuInT 2023), In-10.26.2023 vited speaker (one of ten at yearly conference), Albuquerque, NM • Entangle This: Randomness, Complexity and Quantum Circuits, Centro de Ciencias 6.12.2023 de Benasque Pedro Pascual, Benasque, Spain • NISQ Algorithms and Hardware 2023, organized by Hebrew University of Jerusalem 6.7.2023 in Neve Ilan, Israel • Quantum Interactive Dynamics Workshop II, Physics Department, University of Ox-3.28.2023 ford, Oxford, UK Workshop on Spacetime and Quantum Information, Institute for Advanced Study, 12.7.2022 Princeton, NJ • Cambridge-Warwick Quantum Computing Colloquium, University of Cambridge, 10.25.2022 Online Colloquium (virtual) · Conference on Noisy Intermediate-Scale Quantum Systems: Advances and Appli-9.12.2022 cations, Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, Santa Barbara, CA • Quantum Interactive Dynamics Workshop I, Physics Department, University of Ox-6.23.2022

ford, Oxford, UK

5.12.2022

• Stanford Quantum Information Talk, Physics Department, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (virtual)

1.11.2022

• Towards Classically Intractable Quantum Simulations of Physics and Chemistry workshop, Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, Santa Barbara, CA

7.13.2021

• Quantum Wave in Computing Reunion Workshop, Simons Institute, University of California, Berkeley, CA

7.1.2021

 Dagstuhl workshop "Quantum Complexity: Theory and Application", Dagstuhl, Germany (virtual)

5.12.2021

Quantum Information Seminar, Perimeter Institute, Waterloo, ON, Canada (virtual)

3.16.2021

 American Physical Society March Meeting 2021, Invited Speaker (the only invited talk in the session) for Noisy Intermediate Scale Quantum Computers I session (virtual)

3.4.2021

 Center for Quantum Information and Control Seminar, University of New Mexico, New Mexico (virtual)

10.2.2020

 Workshop on Dynamics, criticality, and universality in random quantum circuit, Max Planck Institute for the Physics of Complex Systems, Dresden, Germany (virtual)

5.6.2020

 Workshop on Quantum Devices: Simulation, Supremacy, and Optimization, Simons Institute, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

Publications (in reverse chronological order)

- 1. **Constraints on Quantum-Advantage Experiments Due to Noise** In Physics, Vol. 18, 174. Published November 3, 2025. Article.
- 2. Exponential improvements to the average-case hardness of BosonSampling with A. Bouland, S. Datta, F. Hernandez

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2026)

To appear in proceedings, 66th IEEE Symposium On Foundations Of Computer Science (FOCS) 2025.

arXiv: 2411.04566.

3. Anti-Concentration for the Unitary Haar Measure and Applications to Random Quantum Circuits with S. Ghosh, W. Zhan

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2025)

To appear in proceedings, Seventeenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2026), Bocconi University, Milan, Italy.

arXiv: 2407.19561.

4. The Hardness of Learning Quantum Circuits and its Cryptographic Applications with S. Ghosh, M. Sinha, H. Yuen.

To appear in proceedings, Seventeenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2026), Bocconi University, Milan, Italy.

arXiv: 2504.15343.

5. Classical algorithm for simulating experimental Gaussian boson sampling with C. Oh, M. Liu, Y. Alexeev, L. Jiang

In Nature Physics, Article published June 25, 2024.

arXiv: 2306.03709.

6. Quantum-inspired classical algorithm for graph problems by Gaussian boson sampling with C. Oh, L. Jiang, N. Quesada.

In PRX Quantum Journal, vol.5, 020341.

arXiv: 2302.00536.

7. **Effect of non-unital noise on random circuit sampling** with S. Ghosh, M. Gullans, K. Kuroiwa, K. Sharma

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2024)

In PRX Quantum Journal, vol. 5, 030317

arXiv: 2306.16659.

8. Public-key pseudoentanglement and the hardness of learning ground state entanglement structure with A. Bouland, S. Ghosh, T. Metger, U. Vazirani, C. Zhang and Z. Zhou.

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2024)

In Proceedings, IEEE Conference on Computational Complexity (CCC 2024), Ann Arbor, MI.

arXiv: 2311.12017.

9. Complexity-theoretic foundations of BosonSampling with a linear number of modes with A. Bouland, D. Brod, I. Datta, D. Grier, F. Hernandez and M. Oszmaniec

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2024)

10. **Approximate t-designs in generic circuit architectures** with D. Belkin, J. Allen, S. Ghosh, C. Kang, S. Lin, J. Sud, F. Chong, B. K. Clark

In PRX Quantum Journal, Volume 5, 040344

arXiv: 2310.19783.

11. Quantum Merlin-Arthur and proofs without relative phase with R. Bassirian, K. Marwaha

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2024)

In Proceedings, Fifteenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2024), Simons Institute, Berkeley

arXiv: 2306.13247.

12. **Quantum Pseudoentanglement** with S. Aaronson, A. Bouland, S. Ghosh, U. Vazirani, Z. Zhou

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2023).

In Proceedings, Fifteenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2024), Simons Institute, Berkeley

arXiv: 2211.00747.

13. Quantum-inspired classical algorithm for molecular vibronic spectra with C. Oh, Y. Lim, Y. Wong, L. Jiang

In Nature Physics, Volume 20, pages 225-231 (2024) August 2023.

arXiv: 2202.01861.

14. **Sharp complexity phase transitions generated by entanglement** with S. Ghosh, A. Deshpande, D. Hangleiter, A. Gorshkov

In Physical Review Letters, vol. 131, 030601

arXiv: 2212.10582.

15. On the power of nonstandard quantum oracles with R. Bassirani, K. Marwaha

In Proceedings of the Eighteenth Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC 2023), Aveiro, Portugal.

arXiv: 2212.00098.

16. Spoofing cross entropy measure in boson sampling with C. Oh, L. Jiang

In Physical Review Letters, vol. 131, 010401

arXiv: 2210.15021.

17. **The learnability of Pauli noise** with S. Chen, Y. Liu, M. Otten, A. Seif and L. Jiang

In Nature Communications, Volume 14, Article 52

arXiv: 2206.06362.

18. **Tight bounds on the convergence of noisy random circuits to the uniform distribution** with A. Deshpande, P. Niroula, O. Shtanko, A. V. Gorshkov and M. J. Gullans

In PRX Quantum Journal, vol. 3, 040329

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2022)

arXiv: 2110.01564.

19. Classical simulation of boson sampling based on graph structure with C. Oh, Y. Lim, L. Jiang

In Physical Review Letters, vol. 128, 190501

arXiv: 2110.01564.

20. **Intractability of Electronic Structure in a Fixed Basis** with B. O'Gorman, S. Irani, J. Whitfield

In PRX Quantum Journal, vol. 3, 020322

arXiv: 2103.08215.

21. Quantum Computational Supremacy via High-Dimensional Gaussian Boson Sampling with A. Deshpande, A. Mehta, T. Vincent, N. Quesada, M. Hinsche, M. Ioannou, L. Madsen, J. Lavoie, H. Qi, J. Eisert, D. Hangleiter, I. Dhand

In Science Advances, Vol 8, Issue 1, 2022

arXiv: 2102.12474.

22. Classical simulation of lossy boson sampling using matrix product operators with C. Oh, K. Noh, L. Jiang

In Phys. Rev. A, vol. 104, 022407

arXiv: 2101.11234.

23. **Noise and the Frontier of Quantum Supremacy** with A. Bouland, Z. Landau, Y. Liu In Proceedings of IEEE Foundations of Computer Science (FOCS 2021).

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2021).

arXiv: 2102.01738.

24. **The importance of the spectral gap in estimating ground-state energies** with A. Deshpande, A.V. Gorshkov

In PRX Quantum Journal, vol. 3, 040327.

In Proceedings, Tenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2022), Berkeley, California.

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2021).

arXiv: 2007.11582.

25. Eliminating Intermediate Measurements in Space-Bounded Quantum Computation with Z. Remscrim

In Proceedings of ACM Symposium on Theory of Computing (STOC 2021).

Accepted talk at Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2021).

arXiv: 2006.03530.

26. Complexity phase diagram for interacting and long-range bosonic Hamiltonians with N. Maskara, A. Deshpande, A. Ehrenberg, M.C. Tran, A. V Gorshkov

In Physical Review Letters 125, 250501, 2020.

arXiv: 1906.04178.

27. Efficient classical simulation of noisy random quantum circuits in one dimension with K. Noh, L. Jiang

In Quantum Journal, volume 4, page 318, 2020.

arXiv: 2003.13163.

28. Closing gaps of a quantum advantage with short-time Hamiltonian dynamics with Jonas Haferkamp, Dominik Hangleiter, Adam Bouland, Jens Eisert, Juani Bermejo-Vega.

In Physical Review Letters 129, 150604, 2022.

arXiv: 1908.08069.

29. Computational pseudorandomness, the wormhole growth paradox, and constraints on the AdS/CFT duality with A. Bouland, U. Vazirani.

In Proceedings, Tenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2020), Seattle, Washington.

arXiv: 1910.14646

30. On the Complexity and Verification of Quantum Random Circuit Sampling with A. Bouland, C. Nirkhe, U. Vazirani.

In Nature Physics (Article), 2018.

Also accepted talk, Twenty-second Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2019), Boulder, Colorado.

Also in Proceedings, Tenth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2019), San Diego, CA.

arXiv: 1803.04402.

31. **Dynamical phase transitions in sampling complexity** with A. Deshpande, M.C Tran, M. Foss-Feig, and A.V Gorshkov.

In Physical Review Letters, vol. 121, 030501, 2018.

arXiv: 1703.05332.

32. **Exact Sampling Hardness of Ising Spin Models** with A.V Gorshkov and M. Foss-Feig.

In Physical Review A, vol. 96, no. 3, 2017.

arXiv: 1701.03167.

33. **Space-Efficient Error Reduction for Unitary Quantum Computations** with H. Kobayashi, C. Lin, T. Morimae, and H. Nishimura

In Proceedings of the Fourty-third International Colloquium on Automata, Languages, and Programming (ICALP 2016), Tacoma, Washington, US.

Also Accepted talk, Sixteenth Asian Quantum Information Science Conference (AQIS 2016), Taipei, Taiwan.

arXiv: 1604.08192.

34. **Computational Security of Quantum Encryption** with G. Alagic, A. Broadbent, T. Gagliardoni, C. Schaffner, and M. St. Jules

Accepted talk, Sixth International Conference on Quantum Cryptography, (QCrypt 2016), Washington D.C.

Also in Proceedings of Ninth International Conference on Information Theoretic Security (ICITS 2016), Tacoma, Washington, US.

arXiv: 1602.01441.

35. On Quantum Obfuscation with G. Alagic.

Accepted talk, Sixth International Conference on Quantum Cryptography (QCrypt 2016), Washington D.C.

arXiv: 1602.01771.

36. A Complete Characterization of Unitary Quantum Space with C. Lin

Accepted talk, Twentieth Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2017), Seattle, Washington.

Also in Proceedings, Ninth Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2018), Cambridge, MA.

arXiv: 1604.01384.

37. Quantum Merlin Arthur with Exponentially Small Gap with C. Lin

Merged with "A Complete Characterization of Unitary Quantum Space", 2016.

arXiv: 1601.01975.

38. Quantum vs Classical Proofs and Subset Verification with S. Kimmel

In Proceedings of Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science (MFCS 2018), Liverpool, England.

arXiv: 1510.06750.

39. On the Power of Quantum Fourier Sampling with C. Umans

In Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on the Theory of Quantum Computation, Communication and Cryptography (TQC 2016), Berlin, Germany.

arXiv: 1507.05592.

40. On the Power of Quantum Fourier Sampling

Ph.D Thesis, California Institute of Technology, 2014.

41. On Beating the Hybrid Argument with R. Shaltiel, C. Umans and E. Viola.

In Theory of Computing, 9(26):809-843, 2013.

Also in Proceedings, Third Conference on Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS 2012), Cambridge, MA.

ECCC: TR10-186.

42. On Quantum Computing and Pseudorandomness

M.S Thesis, California Institute of Technology, 2011.

43. Pseudorandom Generators and the BQP vs PH Problem with C. Umans

Featured talk, Fourteenth Conference on Quantum Information Processing (QIP 2011), Singapore.

arXiv: 1007.0305.

44. **The Power of Unentanglement** with S. Aaronson, S. Beigi, A. Drucker, P. Shor

In Theory of Computing, 5(1):1-42, 2009.

Also in Proceedings, Twenty-third IEEE Conference on Computational Complexity (CCC 2008), College Park, MD.

arXiv: 0804.0802.

Grants

2021

2021

2020

Department of Energy, National Quantum Initiative Project (co-PI)

• PROPOSAL TITLE: "Next Generation Quantum Science and Engineering (QNEXT)"

Department of Energy, HEP-QIS QuantISED multi-institution collaborative program (co-PI)

PROPOSAL TITLE: "Complex Quantum Systems and The Quantum Universe Consortium"

Air Force Office of Scientific Research grant (single PI)

- Proposal title: "The verification and benchmarking of near-term quantum computations"
- AWARD NUMBER: FA9550-21-1-0008

Advising

2015-2021 Abhinav Deshpande (graduated, University of Maryland, co-advised with Alexey Gor-

shkov, After graduation: Postdoc at Caltech, Current employment: Research Staff Mem-

ber at IBM Research, Almaden in San Jose, California)

 $_{\rm 2019-2025}$ Roozbeh Bassirianjahromi (Graduated), currently at Google

Soumik Ghosh (PhD student)
Kunal Marwaha (PhD student)

2020-2023 Zachary Remscrim (Postdoctoral scholar)

2020-2023 Nicholas Laracuente (Postdoctoral scholar), currently Assistant Professor, Computer Sci-

ence Department, University of Indiana Bloomington

²⁰²³⁻²⁰²⁵ Wei Zhan (Postdoctoral scholar), currently Assistant Professor, Computer Science Depart-

ment, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana