

Brain Matters Writers



My name is Alisha, and I am a sophomore majoring in brain and cognitive sciences as well as minoring in chemistry and psychology. My major allows me to learn how intelligent systems work and this includes intelligent computer systems. I get to intertwine subjects of psychology with cs and learn how they can be used together to understand the world of artificial intelligence and the idea of "what is a mind". I am also a research assistant in the Brain and Cognitive Development lab where we study the basic perceptual and cognitive abilities one is born with. We observe the development in children which can inform us on how early brain organization can inform theories of conceptual development. My personal interests in research delve into neurodivergent disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder in children and what could possibly be utilized as a therapy for them.



Katy Simmons is an MCB major pursuing a certificate in neuroscience! Her interests include cellular neuroscience and neuroimmunology. She is involved in Brain Matters as a design team member, editor, and writer. Her favorite thing about being a part of the journal is meeting and engaging with others that are passionate about neuroscience. Apart from her role in Brain Matters, she is a research assistant in the Evolution of Intelligent Systems lab, as well as the Evolutionary Immunology and Genomics Laboratory. After undergrad, she plans to attend grad school to conduct her own research in cellular neuroscience!



Vyapti is a Freshman majoring in psychology. She is interested in neurobiology and the workings of the mind and its connection to psychology. Outside of the academic realm, she enjoys spending time reading books and sketching. She enjoys researching topics about the brain that are both fascinating and that help bring awareness, which the "Brain Matters" organization allows her to do. She has currently written an article on the Makings of the Antisocial Behavior type, which not only educates others on the situational and biological aspect of those with the Antisocial Behavior type, but also brings awareness, so that these cases can be better resolved, and prevented from causing chaos.



Saani Kulkarni is a rising junior majoring in Bioengineering with a minor in Computer Science. Outside of academics, she is passionate about learning from different cultures and travel, choosing to further her knowledge by working as a Global Engineering Ambassador for the school. She hopes to combine her interest in neuroscience with her skills in order to promote student awareness on campus in regard to neurodegenerative disorders.





Alex graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2023, where he majored in psychology with a concentration in cognitive neuroscience. He was a member of the Undergraduate Psychology Association and LGBTQ+ KiKi and is currently a research assistant in the Learning and Language Lab at UIUC under Dr. Jon Willits. In his free time, Alex enjoys reading and local music. He is passionate about approaching science from a philosophically informed perspective and hopes that his writing in Brain Matters will spark an interest in this point of view for others interested in neuroscience.



Bilal is an undergraduate student currently studying Biomolecular Engineering on a pre-med track. He is currently involved with a few organizations on campus: IDEA Institute, Cancer Center at Illinois, and the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. His interests align with tissue engineering, translational sciences, and the use of health technology. Additionally, he is pursuing a minor in Computer Science. Bilal is active in the research community and hopes to use more of machine learning and artificial intelligence to further automate human interaction. He loves to run, hang with friends, and listen to podcasts in his spare time. You can usually catch him on the quad going for a nice stroll.



Michelle is a sophomore pursuing a major in Chemistry and a minor in Computer Science. Aside from being a part of the journal, Michelle is currently working in the Silverman Lab as an undergraduate researcher. She is excited to explore the field of neuroscience by writing for Brain Matters.



Shireen Aydogan is a sophomore majoring in Molecular and Cellular Biology on a pre-med track and exploring the possibility of an Arabic and Communications minor. She devotes time to teach English to refugees and volunteer at the free health clinic in the community throughout the school year as well. In her free time she enjoys playing the guitar, and spending time with her family. She also likes to stay active by playing basketball and snowboarding. She hopes to increase awareness in neuroscience through her writing and as Social/Advertising Chair for brain matters.





Matthew Babik is a sophomore in the Biochemistry major. He is pursuing an MD. Ph.D. where he hopes to study neuronal mapping techniques as a scientist and perform in utero spina bifida treatments as a medical doctor. During the fall 2021 semester, Matthew worked in UIUC's Roger Adams Laboratory where he researched yeast vacuole proteins and their potential use as homologous models for higher eukaryotic vesicles. Since high school, he has been interested in the topic of dendritic nonlinearities and neuroscience as a whole. He found that writing for the journal was a great outlet for exploring this interest.



Sarah Masud is a freshman pursuing a dual degree in Psychology and Information Sciences. She also plans to minor in Art & Design. Some of her academic interests include cognitive science, human-computer interaction, and psychiatric disorders. She enjoys drawing and visiting coffee shops as well! Outside of Brain Matters, she is also involved in the Undergraduate Psychology Association and Stitching Illini. She hopes to continue furthering her understanding of neuroscience through writing for the journal.

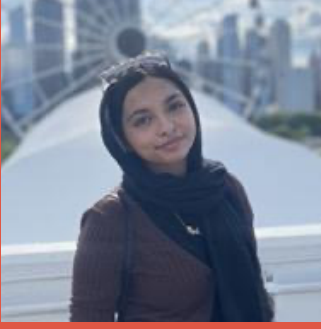


Hello! My name is Celeste Acosta and I'm a Senior in Molecular and Cellular Biology and Psychology! I'm from Cicero, Illinois. I'm currently training to work at the Physical and Neurocognitive Health Lab with Dr. Dominika Pindus and her team on campus. I love learning about the brain and it's wonderful ability to constantly change itself even in the most challenging circumstances! In the future I'd like to apply what I've learned about Neuroscience in a clinical setting as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist. In my free time I like to take pictures, read, play Animal Crossing, and spend time with my family back home!



Ruibin (Violet) Wang is a senior student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she is pursuing a major in Psychology with a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience. Her passion for the field of Neuroscience and Psychology Research is reflected in her various experiences, including her current role as an Undergraduate Research Assistant in the Juraska Lab, where she studies the effect of phthalates on rats' hippocampus.





Neha Bashir is majoring in MCB Honors on the pre-med track, with a minor in Business. Her interests include neuroscience and cognitive health. She is a writer for Brain Matters, which allows her the opportunity to learn about pursue new information about the brain and nervous system. She first became interested with the brain in high school when she was provided the opportunity to hold a cadaver brain, and became inspired as she traced her fingers along the sulci and gyri. Additional to being a writer in Brain Matters, she is involved in cultural and medical clubs at UIUC, as well as being an undergraduate research assistant in the Physical Activity and Neurocognitive Health Lab. After graduating from UIUC, she hopes to attend medical school and achieve a career as a pediatric neurologist.

