

Brain Matters Writers



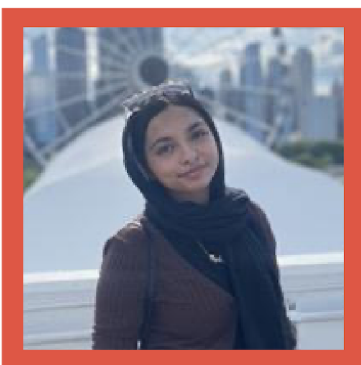
Julia Gainski graduated in May of 2022 with a major in Integrative Biology and a minor in German. She was the Public Relations Chair and a writer for Brain Matters. During her time as a research assistant in the Control & Network Connectivity Team (CONNECTlab) at the Beckman Institute of Advanced Science and Technology, she presented and published her senior thesis. Additionally, she was the President of the Pre-Pre-Physician Assistant Club, an Integrative Biology Peer Leader, and a McKinley Special Populations Peer during her time at UIUC.



Khushi is a Molecular and Cellular Biology major who is passionate about the intersection of exercise and brain health. In particular, she is interested in the mechanisms and potential of resistance training in enhancing general brain health, improving neuroplasticity, and preventing numerous neurodegenerative conditions. Khushi is also involved in research focused in dietary polyphenols and genetic therapies for Alzheimer's disease. Outside of school, she enjoys reading, playing pickleball, and watching tv. Khushi is thrilled to be a part of Brainmatters and to share the latest research and promote a greater understanding of the brain, its functions, and its potential.



Violet Park is a sophomore majoring in Integrative Biology and currently a research assistant at the Miller Mycology Lab studying the evolutionary relationship of the fungi species Rhytismatales. She is also involved at an ophthalmology eye clinic where she helps patients who may be facing cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, or diabetic retinopathy. In her free time, she enjoys calligraphy and bullet journaling as well as spending time outside or working out. She became interested in neuroscience and psychology after taking various behavioral science courses at college and joining the Alzheimer's Association. Violet hopes to attend medical school and continue research in the future!



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.



Delisha Nair is a freshman majoring in Brain and Cognitive Science on the pre-med track and exploring the possibility of a Spanish minor and/or Health Administration minor. She is an aspiring surgeon hoping to specialize in neurosurgery. She devotes most of her time to running her photography business, being the Volunteering Chair for American Medical Students Association, and volunteering weekly at the Carle Foundation Hospital. In her free time, she enjoys playing the violin, drawing/painting, swimming, watching her favorite shows and spending quality time with friends and family.



My name is Vyapti Patel, and I am from Bloomingdale, a suburb near Chicago here in Illinois. The research that I am currently involved in is regarding the 7T-fMRI study here at the Beckman Institute. We are working on gathering data through clinical trials regarding the working memory of individuals. This would hold the potential of bringing out a 7-T fMRI machine in the field of medicine. My hobbies consist of reading fantasy and mystery novels, as well as painting on the Quad. I love neuroscience because it is such a fascinating mystery, and every time I am learning about the brain, my intrigue for it grows and questions upon questions pop in my head that I want to expand my knowledge on.



Hi, my name is Yushan Li, and I am a rising sophomore at the University of Illinois, majoring in Bioengineering and hoping to transfer to Molecular and Cellular Biology. I am currently working in Roger Adams Laboratory where I researched about optogenetics and cell imaging. Outside lab, I enjoy doing origami tessellation, digital drawing, collecting instant ramen lids, and playing 2048 game (personal record: 16384 tiles). After undergrad, I plan to conduct research in graduate school.



Vani Sharma is majoring in MCB Honors on the pre-med track, with a minor in public health & neuroscience certificate. She is a writer for Brain Matters, which allows her the opportunity to learn about the brain & its neuroanatomy in depth along with her interest in brain disorders. On campus, she is heavily involved with medical clubs & the Illini Strings Orchestra, serves as an undergraduate research ambassador, is a part of the Madak Erdogan Women's Health & Metabolism Lab, and works as a teaching assistant for chemistry. After graduating from UIUC, she hopes to attend medical school.





Ruchi Prakash is a sophomore pursuing a degree in psychology and neuroscience. Some of her academic interests include cellular neuroscience and the effect of drugs. In her free time, Ruchi enjoys painting, reading, and hanging out with friends. Currently, she is also a member of Illini Fighting Alzheimer's and Brainwaves. Through these organizations, as well as Brain Matters, she hopes to increase education of neurodegenerative disorders and brain science.



Susana is a sophomore studying Integrative Biology. Her academic interests range from ecology and evolution to physiology and genetics, and she loves learning about all topics related to biology, including neuroscience. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys taking care of plants, baking, reading, and especially writing, which is what motivated her to work with Brain Matters. This is her first publication, and she plans to continue pursuing a career in biological research.



Sarah Masud is a sophomore 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, finding new music, and visiting coffee shops as well! Outside of Brain Matters, she is also a Market Research & Communications Intern at the Cargill Innovation Lab and involved in the Undergraduate Psychology Association. She hopes to continue furthering her understanding of neuroscience through writing for the journal.



Benedict graduated in Spring 2023 with a degree in Psychology, concentrating in Behavioral Neuroscience. As an undergraduate student, his research experience involved studying memory and social behaviour in rodents. Today, Benedict is an aspiring cognitive neuroscientist interested in the mechanisms of sleep and its relation to cognition. He currently works as a Research Assistant at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center.



Cindy Mu is a current junior majoring in Chemistry and Molecular Biology here at UIUC. As an avid neuroscience researcher and writer, she explores the frontiers of medicine, accessibility, and human identity in formats of creative writing, screenplay, and research. Her work has appeared in venues such as the Belmont Story Review, Montage Arts Journal, and Carle Foundation Hospital Journal.



Erin Ford is a sophomore majoring in Chemical Engineering with a concentration in Biomolecular Engineering. In her free time, she enjoys playing tennis and painting. She hopes to help others increase their knowledge about neuroscience through her writing in Brain Matters.



Megan Lu is a sophomore majoring in Brain & Cognitive Science with a minor in Health Administration and Business. She is involved in various RSOs on campus, including TEDxUIUC and Alpha Epsilon Delta (a pre-health fraternity), and is currently doing research with the Illinois Alternative Protein Project. In her free time, Megan spends most of her time at the gym working out, cooking new recipes, or listening to true crime podcasts. She hopes to deepen her understanding and appreciation of the brain through writing with Brain Matters.



Kaitlyn Tuvilla is a sophomore majoring in bioengineering and trying to achieve a Neuroscience certificate. Other than Brain Matters, Kaitlyn works as a pharmacy technician and also is involved in the Philippine Student Association's Barkada dance group. In her free time, she loves playing piano, baking sweet treats for her friends, and crocheting! Through her, and her talented peers' articles, she hopes to spark curiosity towards neuroscience devices and potential pharmaceutical advances.





Hello, my name is Rikhil Chitimilla, a current Junior majoring in MCB and planning to get my neuroscience certificate as well. In my spare time I enjoy going around campus and visiting restaurants that I haven't been at before. I love to cook and have been trying to get into baking as of recently. On campus I work as a TA for LAS 101 and as an RA in Townsend Hall. Brain matters has really allowed me to conduct my own research and explore my own interests in the field of neuroscience.



Tyler Smith is a senior majoring in Molecular and Cellular Biology. He works in the Gaj lab as a research assistant in the Bioengineering department. In the lab he conducts research on harnessing the therapeutic potential of CRISPR gene editing to treat neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's Disease and Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). After graduation he intends to attend graduate school to further study neurodegeneration and gene editing.