



Cognitive Science Alumni Newsletter

LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

Dear Michigan Cognitive Science alumni,

I hope this letter finds you well. We're very excited to share our first Alumni Newsletter with you—it's just a way to stay in touch and let you know about Cognitive Science-related developments, news, and alumni opportunities here on campus. Such as: did you know that Cognitive Science is now the 12th biggest major in LSA? We hit 389 majors before graduation this April, and held our commencement ceremony in the new Central Campus Classroom Building auditorium (most boring name for the most stunning building on campus) because we outgrew the event space in Weiser Hall! Check it out next time you are on campus. This is also where we now teach COGSCI200. I bet some of you remember being in Mason Hall, or an even smaller classroom...enrollment is now 425!

Over the last couple of years we've had some staffing changes, saying goodbye to our long-time Chief Administrator Talisha Reviere-Winston, now at Michigan's NPR radio station (ok, still waiting for the cognitive science story on the morning radio...) and hello to a great new team, who you can meet [here](#). In other news, we crushed Ohio State last November, not sure if you heard.

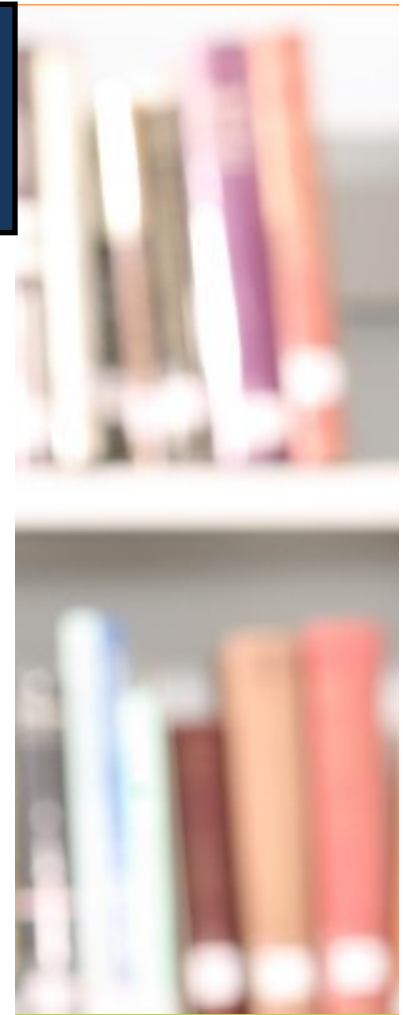
But our main reason for getting in touch is we want to hear from YOU! You were—and ARE—an amazing group, trailblazers while you were here, and now off doing so many cool things in so many different ways. Please drop us a note and let us know what you are up to.

And you know who else wants to hear from you? Our CURRENT students! They want to hear about life as a Cognitive Science and Michigan alum, whether you are in business, nonprofit, academia, government, in the U.S. or abroad...just remember what it was like to be a junior (or senior!) thinking: what am I going to do? Now is your chance to help those following in your footsteps. If you'd like to join an alumni panel to talk to our students, let us know!

We miss you! Please stop by the Institute when you are in Ann Arbor. In the meantime, best wishes to you and your family and friends, stay safe and healthy, and Go Blue!

On behalf of the Weinberg Institute staff and faculty,

Dr. Richard Lewis,
Director, Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science



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[Alumni Interest
Form](#)

AWARD WINNERS

The Weinberg Institute extends congratulations to our undergraduate award-wins from 2021–2022

Service Award
Emily Otto



Robert J. Glushko Thesis Award

Russell Noble



Patricia Kennedy Thesis Award

Faye Polasek



Weinberg Institute Updates

2022 MARSHALL M. WEINBERG SYMPOSIUM

The 2022 Marshall M. Weinberg Symposium was held virtually on Friday, March 25. The theme of the symposium was "The Cognitive Science of Concepts: Contrasting Perspectives Across the Disciplines."



The symposium presented a range of contrasting and complementary perspectives on concepts from leaders in the field in their respective sub-disciplines. The panelists were Michael Tomasello, Sandra Waxman, Michael Strevens, and Marjorie Rhodes).

[See presenter bios, abstracts, and schedule session.](#)

COGSCI COMMUNITY COLLOQUIUM

The Colloquium brings together students, faculty, affiliates, and alumni to friends to share their work and address current issues in and research topics related to cognitive science and linguistics. Colloquia are typically held annually for Cognitive Science during the winter academic term.

Hosted by the [Cognitive Science Community](#) student organization with support from the Weinberg Institute, the 2022 event featured undergraduate presentations by Julia Smoot & Stephanie Hong. Julia's research tested the validity of the Mosher Sex Guilt Inventory in measuring sex guilt. Stephanie's research focused on how the viewing order and valence of emotions impact willingness-to-pay and perception of advertisements using Instagram reels.



AIDAN WOLFORD PRESENTS THESIS WORK AT HSP 2022

Linguistics and Cognitive Science major Aidan Wolford, presented his honors thesis work at the 35th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing (HSP) on March 24, 2022.

His presentation about L2 sentence processing of verb biases using the maze task was titled "Syntactic parsing of L2 verb structural continuation bias by Spanish-English bilinguals."



To read the abstract, visit the HSP conference [website](#).

Faculty Updates

PROFESSOR JULIE BOLAND IS LEAD AUTHOR ON THE STUDY 'ZOOM DISRUPTS THE RHYTHM OF CONVERSATION'



If you've felt exhausted or burned out after a Zoom video conferencing for work or social life, you're not alone. [Julie Boland](#), Professor of Psychology and Linguistics and director of the Psycholinguistics Lab, assisted in a [research study](#) that examined how lag time impedes the rhythm of conversation

The study's co-authors, Pedro Fonseca, Ilana Mermelstein and Myles Williamson, are all undergraduates from Cognitive Science!

SUSAN GELMAN WINS APA DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS AWARD



[Susan Gelman](#), Heinz Werner Distinguished University Professor of Psychology and Linguistics, has won the 2022 APA Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award, bestowed by the American Psychological Association (APA).

According to the APA, the Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions “honors psychologists who have made

distinguished theoretical or empirical contributions to basic research in psychology.”

PROFESSOR RICHARD LEWIS NAMED ARTHUR F. THURNAU PROFESSOR



Professor [Rick Lewis](#) has been named an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to undergraduate education.

Professor Lewis, who is director of the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science, is one of five U-M faculty recipients, approved by the U-M Board of Re-

gents on February 18, 2021. Thurnau professors retain the title throughout their careers and receive \$20,000 to support activities that further enhance their teaching.

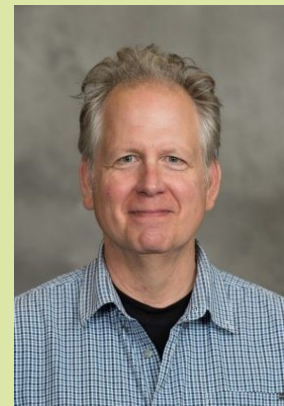
IN MEMORIAM Sam Epstein 1956-2019

Samuel David Epstein, Marilyn J. Shatz Collegiate Professor of Linguistics and Cognitive Science, passed away on November 29, 2019.

On Sunday, January 26, 2020, a memorial service was held in Weiser Hall to remember and celebrate the life of our colleague, Sam Epstein, who taught at U-M for 22 years.

Epstein distinction in teaching and mentoring was recognized by a John D'Arms Award for Excellence in Graduate Mentoring (2009) and an Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship (2013). He was instrumental in launching a program in cognitive science at Michigan which has become one of the fastest growing undergraduate majors in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. He was the founding Director of the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science, established in 2014 with a gift from Marshall Weinberg (UM Philosophy, '50) of New York City.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Samuel D. Epstein Undergraduate Scholarship Fund for students with financial need. Online gifts can be made at tinyurl.com/SamuelEpsteinMemorial or mailed to LSA 101 North Main Street, Suite 850, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.



Alumni Profiles

On Thursday, March 24, six CogSci alumni discussed their post-graduate journeys with our undergraduates!

[Link to video of panel.](#)

Guest Speakers

Claire Butz - Class of 2018 (Decision)

Alyssa Chua -Class of 2021 (Decision)

Logan Bickel - Class of 2018 (Philosophy)

Kelly Kendro - Class of 2019 (Language)

Sean Anderson - Class of 2020(Computation)

Camille Phaneuf - Class of 2019 (Computation)

If you would like to be featured in our next Alumni Panel, please complete the interest form below!

[Alumni Interest Form](#)



KELLY KENDRO | CLASS OF 2019|LANGUAGE

Activities as a student:

As a student, I was in the Residential College and involved in RC Forums and the Undergraduate Linguistics Club. I also participated in research with Julie Boland (Psycholinguistics lab) and Nicholas Henriksen and Lorenzo García-Amaya, and I completed my senior thesis in Dr. Boland's lab.

Since graduating from U-M...

After graduating, I moved to San Diego and worked as a lab coordinator in David Barner's Language and Development Lab at UCSD Psychology. I am now a graduate student in Linguistics at the University of Utah. I've also been able to continue collaborating with the U-M Speech Production Lab over the past two years.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

I've been able to mentor undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students in several capacities, both at U-M and at other institutions, which is really rewarding to me. I love helping others get excited about language research! Knowing that someone took a chance on me when I was an undergraduate, I am even more enthusiastic to give budding scientists the same chance.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

Cognitive Science at U-M was so much fun! I enjoyed intellectually engaging with professors from several disciplines, most of whom went above and beyond classroom instruction to inspire their students. The flexibility of the required coursework allowed me to explore my personal interests (language acquisition and bilingualism) while explicitly tying them back to my cognitive science degree. Even now, as I interact and collaborate with other faculty members across the field, I am constantly learning just how special of an opportunity I had to study under the experts at U-M. Finally, I find that my cognitive science background has prepared me to address empirical questions from multiple perspectives, which likely would not be the case if I had only majored in Linguistics or Psychology.



LOGAN BICKEL | CLASS OF 2018 | PHILOSOPHY



Activities as a Student:

I was involved in quite a bit of research as an undergraduate student, serving both as a research assistant in the Ecological Neuroscience Laboratory (under Dr. Stephanie Preston) and a lab manager for the Lab for Computational Cognitive Science (under Dr. Rick Lewis).

Since graduating from U-M:

After graduating, I spent two years working as a lab manager for the Social and Affective Neuroscience Laboratory at Brown University (under Dr. Oriel Feldman-Hall). Here, I worked on questions pertaining to perceptions of emotions and the role of emotions in decision-making. After this, I became a quantitative user experience research contractor at Google, looking at how various sentiments relate to perceptions of security. I've also started a lifelong dream of learning how to surf!

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

Some highlights of my work are still in the process of being materialized in the form of publications or product-changes, but I am proud of the work nonetheless. I'm passionate about asking about people first and methodology second, and I'm grateful that a majority of my work has been inline with that pattern, whether it be the role of emotion in pro-environmental behavior or how the presence of a group affects charitable donations.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

The Cognitive Science degree afforded me the opportunity to analyze what really underlies human behavior, and I hope to continue on a path that does just the same. Not only are the skills I learned throughout my coursework broadly transferable, but the mindset and approach of the institute has allowed me to excel and adapt quickly to new challenges and new industries. Looking beyond the topic itself, a core tenet of the degree is thinking interdisciplinarily, and I've found that interdisciplinary thinking drives new collaboration and innovation. Using this as a cornerstone of my work has given me confidence to pursue questions and topics that I might not be an expert in, but to which I can gladly contribute.

JULIET REN | CLASS OF 2021 | PHILOSOPHY



Activities as a student:

As a student, I was involved in a lot of business extracurriculars like marketing for Google Developers Student Club and other types of marketing ambassadorships for startups like GIST, Ladder, and Heylo as well as a marketing internship for GIST and then later a sales internship for Deel.

Since graduating from U-M...

Since graduating from U-M I transitioned into a full-time role at Deel in sales development and am now working at Asana in enterprise development.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

Something I'm particularly passionate about in my role is being able to cultivate relationships with decision makers in influential companies and enticing them to adopt meaningful changes in their organization to improve their efficiency but also build a stronger and cohesive organization overall.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

Whenever people look at my cognitive science degree and my current role, they're always a little confused. What does Cognitive Science have to do with business or sales? This degree taught me the importance of understanding how the mind works - whether that's through a neuroscientific lens, philosophical, or even economic lens. Having a deeper understanding of the mind helps me learn to communicate better and understand the viewpoints of the people I interact with, especially asking better and thoughtful questions for people (and/or executives) that have been in industry for decades. Another vital lesson is also being able to critically evaluate and understand large bodies of texts and/or scenarios and draw conclusions and communicate those conclusions in simple and result-driven terms. Overall, I'm extremely grateful to have graduated in the Cognitive Science track!

SEAN ANDERSON | CLASS OF 2020 | COMPUTATION



Activities as a Student:

As a student, I got my first taste of research working in Dr. Taraz Lee's lab on cognitive psychology and motor learning. Funded generously by Weinberg student fellowships, I collaborated with fellow lab members on building a brain-scanning experiment of focus of attention and athletic performance. We also worked on experiments about motivation and conscious skill knowledge, which excitedly led to a publication in *Journal of Neurophysiology*.

My cognitive science pals and I traveled to Montreal to attend CogSci '19, the largest international cognitive science conference, where we presented our work to other researchers. Outside of the lab, I studied French Horn in U-M's music school, performing in Ann Arbor and the surrounding areas with fellow music students.

With another cognitive science student, I worked to improve the professional lives of refugees resettled in Southeastern Michigan. Our group, called Refugees to College, received much mentorship from U-M's wider entrepreneurship community including OptiMize. I learned a lot about teamwork and leadership from that experience, and I would highly recommend current students explore what their community has to offer.

Since graduating from U-M:

Since graduating, I joined Dr. Patrick Shafto's Cognitive and Data Science Lab at Rutgers University-Newark. I have been working on exciting projects funded by DARPA on Artificial Social Intelligence, including how players cooperate in a Minecraft-like game, and Explainable AI, including establishing trust in robots predicting medical diagnoses. To pursue my interests in machine learning more deeply, I returned to University of Michigan to study for a Master's in Computer Science.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

One highlight was a chance to combine my interests in music and cognitive science with Dr. Somangshu Mukherji's course on Musico-linguistics. Inspired by the idea that music and language could be produced by the same parts of the mind, I continued to work with Professor Mukherji on an honors thesis project. I demonstrated that a computer program for writing sentences can also write musical chord progressions. I hope to continue investigating computational theories for creativity and expertise in domains like music.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

The U-M Cognitive Science major provided an exciting, flexible, and interdisciplinary way for me to explore my developing interests as an undergrad. I am grateful for the opportunities it gave me to learn in interesting classes and acquire funding for internships and conference travel. The opportunities I had and the relationships I built with my mentors led to my passion or pursuing questions about the mind. I hope to continue building on what I learned studying Cognitive Science at Michigan with a PhD in the near future.

CAMILLE PHANEUF | CLASS OF 2019 | COMPUTATION

Activities as a student:

During my undergraduate studies, I held leadership positions in the Neuroscience Student Association and Phi Sigma Pi National Honors Fraternity. I also served as a Writing Fellow in the Sweetland Center's MWrite Program and as an Honors Mentor in the LSA Honors Program. Most of my time outside of class, however, was devoted to research: I worked with Dr. Daniel Kruger from freshman to senior year, Dr. Jillian Hardee from junior to senior year, and in the Center for Healthcare Engineering and Patient Safety during senior year. Under Dr. Kruger's mentorship, I wrote my Cognitive Science Honors Thesis, titled "Cell Phone Dependence and Socialization: Digital Devices and their Impact on Undergraduate Communication and Behavior." While under Dr. Hardee's mentorship, I wrote my Neuroscience Honors Thesis, titled "Food Addiction in Adolescents as Assessed by Inhibitory Control and the YFAS-C." Outside of Michigan, I participated in a Neuroscience Study Abroad Program at the University of Salamanca. Additionally, I spent two summers interning for the Language Learning Lab (led by Dr. Joshua Hartshorne) at Boston College.



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Since graduating from U-M...

After graduation, I moved to New York University to begin my Lab Manager position in the Hartley Lab (led by Dr. Catherine Hartley). There, I studied the human neurodevelopment of value-based learning, memory, and decision-making using behavioral, neuroimaging, and computational modeling methods. In tandem, I was responsible for a slew of lab administrative responsibilities, including IRB adherence, participant payment, subject recruitment, and new member onboarding. I am currently transitioning from the Hartley Lab to the Affective Neuroscience and Development Lab at Harvard University, where I will be pursuing my PhD with Dr. Leah Somerville.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

I learn something new every hour of every work day by troubleshooting 'problems' that I have never encountered before, in so many different domains. In fact, one of my favorite things about my career path is the variety: within a week, I have the opportunity to read about recent scientific findings, disseminate my work through drafts of publications and presentations, interact with participants to collect human subject data, implement computational and statistical models, consider future studies, analyze and visualize existing and simulated data, and meet with other academics.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

My Cognitive Science degree strongly oriented my research interests; I spent my post-baccalaureate years in a Developmental and Computational Cognitive Neuroscience lab, and will do the same for my graduate studies. I regularly leverage the skills that I gained from my Cognitive Science Honors Thesis, and the knowledge that I gleaned from the Cognitive Science curriculum, in my current work. For example, I implement variants of reinforcement learning models, which were taught in CogSci 200 and EECS 492.

LEVI MYERS | CLASS OF 2021 | DECISION



Activities as a student:

As an undergraduate, I served as a representative and in leadership positions within Central Student Government. I was also apart of a pre-law professional fraternity on campus called KOA, & was a project advisor for Autism Alliance .

Since graduating from U-M:

Since graduating, I took the summer to enjoy my hobbies and activities back home, mainly surfing and hiking. I just moved to Boston so haven't had a chance to get involved in anything yet, but plan on volunteering with my company. Now, I work as an associate within the Product Addition - Data Accuracy Team at Wayfair, where I manage a particular Product Addition Workflow.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

Right now, I manage about 45, soon to be 55 people, on offshore teams. I'm really proud that Wayfair put this much faith in me in an entry-level position.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

My CogSci Degree has had an immense impact on my given career path. What's unique about CogSci is that given the interdisciplinary nature of it, you're able to perform a diverse array of tasks, and have a diversified skillset that matches a variety of positions. I remember my first internship at an investment bank, when the recruiter told me that my resume stood out because she'd never had a CogSci major apply to the position before. Beyond the impact on actually getting the job, I've felt as though my studies within CogSci have been beneficial to my day-to-day job performance, and my ability to professionally problem solve. In decision and cognition, the focus on always questioning, never being satisfied with one perspective, and constantly challenging myself to understand topics holistically has been extremely useful in the professional world.

EDUARDO BATISTA | CLASS OF 2019 | DECISION



Activities as a student:

As a student, I was an advisor to the Vice President of Student Life E. Royster Harper. I researched with Professors Jordan Siegel, Cheng Gao and Julia Lee, in the Business School. And I was a Residential Advisor to students in South Quad for three years.

Since graduating from U-M...

Since graduating from the UofM, I have won a fellowship to study at Tsinghua University in China as a Schwarzman Scholar. Then, I worked in the M&A and private equity space in the large emerging markets of China, Brazil and Vietnam. In Vietnam, I am leading an effort to launch a \$100mm Forest-assets Fund, focused on Vietnam and Laos.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

Beyond [those listed above], I was a point person for Artica Investments' Global Expansion in M&A advisory through a partnership with Clairfield International, when I was in Brazil. I am also a PhD Student at Stanford MS&E department.

How has your U-M Cognitive Science degree influenced your career path?

[The] U-M Cognitive Science degree has provided me with valuable connections. Professor Chandra Sripada made a significant difference in my life by being my mentor in applying for the Schwarzman Program and for the Stanford PhD program. Cognitive science informed my interest in the field of organizational behavior, how people and organizations make decisions, and why. This is something I continue to study in the PhD.

WAYS TO GIVE BACK

We strive to support our students and faculty on the front lines of learning and research and to steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do this, the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science needs your support.

If you would like to be featured in our alumni newsletter or volunteer to share your knowledge with current undergraduates, please complete the form below.

[Alumni Interest Form](#)

Gifts from friends, alumni and the community enable our community to serve society and compete in excellence with other leading public and private universities. Knowledge about cognitive science.

[Donate Online](#)

The Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science advances the scientific understanding of mind through teaching, research, and interdisciplinary collaboration and the exchange of ideas both inside and outside of the classroom.

The Institute administers an undergraduate major in Cognitive Science (BA or BS degree) and a Graduate Certificate Program in Cognitive Science, sponsors interdisciplinary seminars and speaker series, hosts the annual Marshall M. Weinberg Symposium, and supports a postdoctoral scholar and visiting faculty program.

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