

COGNITIVE SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024



M | LSA | WEINBERG INSTITUTE
FOR COGNITIVE SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

Dear Michigan Cognitive Science alumni,

We're very excited to share our 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. As we celebrate the 10th year anniversary of the Weinberg Institute, we are very pleased to report that cognitive science continues to thrive at Michigan.

In the previous academic year, we were the 12th biggest major in LSA with 411 majors, we taught Cogsci 200 to more than 800 students, and we packed the house for graduation at the Central Campus Classroom Building auditorium with 549 attendees. This is also where we now teach COGSCI200. I still remember when Rick Lewis and I taught the first version of that course in 2012 to 75 students!

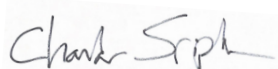
As we look to the future, dramatic new opportunities are emerging due to the rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI), which is shaking things up in cognitive science. Every few weeks, generative AI models reach new milestones in terms of intelligence, reasoning, and creativity. These developments are opening up exciting new frameworks and models for thinking about how human minds work. Even the limitations of these machines (and there are many!) are teaching us about distinctive capacities of human minds that might otherwise go unappreciated.

One of my goals as Weinberg Institute director is to make sure Michigan cognitive science students are at the forefront of the interface between cognitive science and generative AI. Thus, we are reimagining the cognitive science learning experience through courses, symposiums, and tutorials to meet the changes and opportunities that lie ahead. For example, Weinberg Institute postdoctoral fellow Andrew McInerney is teaching a newly created course, "Alien Anatomy: How ChatGPT Works" to 100 students in Fall 2024. And in Winter 2025, Weinberg Director Chandra Sripada (me!) and former Director Rick Lewis are planning to teach another new course, "Cognitive Science and Generative AI". These are just two examples, and there is much more in the works.

This Alumni Newsletter is a way to stay in touch and let you know about Cognitive Science-related developments at Michigan. But it is also a way for us to hear from YOU. Our alumni are a truly AMAZING group, thinking up new ideas, building new tools, taking on new challenges, and all around just doing cool things. Please drop us a note and let us know what you are up to— we'd love to hear from you.

We wish you and your family and friends a happy and healthy year, and Go Blue!

On behalf of the Weinberg Institute staff and faculty,



Dr. Chandra Sripada,
Director, Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science

Stay connected
with the WICS
community

INSTAGRAM

LINKEDIN

Have an
opportunity
you'd like to
share with
students?

NETWORKING

CAREER

Update Your
Information

SUBMIT FORM

Alumni Profile
Interest Form

SUBMIT TODAY!

WEINBERG INSTITUTE UPDATES

OLUBUKOLA PATH TO COGNITIVE SCIENCE AT U-M

Discover Olubukola Akinbami's inspiring journey from the U.S. Army to finding her community and academic passion at the University of Michigan.

[READ MORE](#)

2024 MARSHALL M. WEINBERG SYMPOSIUM

On March 29, 2024, the 12th annual Marshall M. Weinberg Symposium at the University of Michigan explored "Natural vs. Artificial Intelligence in the Age of ChatGPT." Esteemed speakers, including Yejin Choi, Melanie Mitchell, Paul Smolensky, and Raphaël Millière, discussed the limits, potential, and understanding of AI compared to human intelligence. The event also featured an inaugural poster session for undergraduates, where students like Hannah Feng, Sophia Micale, and Grace Desjardins were recognized for their outstanding research contributions.

[READ MORE](#)

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 GRADUATES

On Thursday, May 2, the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science joyfully commemorated the achievements of the 2024 graduating class. Ilana Mermelstein and Myles Williamson, both from the Decision Track, were the chosen speakers for the ceremony, offering their reflections to the graduating class.

2024 AWARD WINNERS



SERVICE AWARD
Jill Charbonneau



**ROBERT J. GLUSHKO
THESIS AWARD**
Ilana Mermelstein

[READ MORE](#)

EXPLORING COGNITIVE SCIENCE ACROSS CONTINENTS

Meet Dezhi Lou, a UMich junior studying cognitive science and linguistics. Discover his journey and insights from attending the Cognitive Science Society meeting.

[READ MORE](#)

FACULTY UPDATES

STEPHANIE PRESTON FEATURED IN TIME

Travel can significantly enhance your well-being, but only if managed wisely. From taking multiple short trips and temporarily deleting apps to considering your travel companions and packing efficiently, these tips from experts can help ensure your vacation truly boosts your mental health and leaves you refreshed.

[READ MORE](#)

ALEXANDER WEIGARD IN THE PRESS

[READ MORE](#)

IOULIA KOVELMAN RECEIVES AMY L. AND KIRK L. WOLFE PRIZE

Dr. Ioulia Kovelman, Professor of Psychology, has won the 2024 Amy L. and Kirk L. Wolfe Prize for her exemplary role as an educator and mentor in the BCN program. Known for her innovative teaching and impactful research in developmental neuroscience, Dr. Kovelman is dedicated to preparing students for advanced academic and professional careers.

[READ MORE](#)

TARAZ LEE RECEIVES PSYCHONOMIC SOCIETY EARLY CAREER AWARD

[READ MORE](#)

WHAT DO LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS TELL US ABOUT HUMAN LANGUAGE?

The [13th Annual Marshall M. Weinberg Symposium](#) will be held on Friday, March 21st, 2025, in the Michigan League Ballroom located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We extend a warm invitation to all who are interested to join us either in person or via livestream.

We will have an afternoon filled with insightful discussions, engaging poster presentations, and opportunities for networking with fellow attendees. To ensure you don't miss out on any updates regarding the event schedule, speakers, and other pertinent details, we encourage you to regularly visit our website where all information will be promptly posted. Stay tuned as more exciting details about the symposium are unveiled!

ALUMNI PROFILES



JILL CHARBONNEAU *SHE/HER*

2024 | BA Philosophy & Cognition, BA Sociology

Intellectual Property Project Assistant at Jones Day Chicago

Career and/or professional highlights since graduating from U-M:

In my role within the intellectual property department, I assist Joint Defense Groups in high-stakes litigation within the International Trade Commission and State Courts by fulfilling the typical duties of a paralegal.

Current research and/or professional interests:

At Jones Day, outside of intellectual property, I am able to assist on pro bono matters, such as assisting disabled veterans navigate the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and assisting at the Notre Dame Innocence Project. Outside of this, I have been able to assist at an expungement clinic for survivors of human trafficking as well as volunteer at Bounce Children's Foundation.

These experiences have solidified my desire to attend law school with a focus on disability studies.

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

This degree has taught me how to craft thoughtful and critical argumentative pieces, as well as pay close attention to detail, evidence, and rhetoric in the drafting phase. Furthermore, it taught me how to synthesize large amounts of data and evidence to key points that translate to easy application and understanding of a topic. Through the philosophy track, these skills were developed through my logic and philosophy courses.



ANDREW ARCHIE *HE/HIM*

2021 | BA Decision & Cognition, BA Psychology, Minor History

Master Student at the U-M School of Social Work

[WATCH ANDREW'S ALUMNI PROFILE](#)



ZACHARY ENGLISH *HE/HIM*

2024 | BA Philosophy & Cognition, BA Philosophy, Minor in Religion

J.D. Candidate at the University of Michigan Law School

Career and/or professional highlights since graduating from U-M:

Two years of work/service in an Oakland County-based law firm specializing in assisting clients with cognitive impairments, memory issues, and other disabilities. Acceptance and enrollment in the University of Michigan Law School class of 2026.

Current professional interests:

Michigan Law Federalist Society

Judicial Intern for the Honorable Hala Y. Jarbou

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

It has helped me tremendously in my efforts to assist clients while working in a law firm setting. While my work was not in any way within a clinical setting, I was able to use my background in Cognitive Science to help the firm communicate with clients suffering from various aphasia and other cognitive impairments.

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.

GET INVOLVED

Gift & Donation Opportunities

[EXPLORE GIVING](#)

Share Your News With Us

[SUBMIT NEWS TODAY](#)

Connect with Current Undergraduates

[LSA CONNECT](#)

Check Us out on Instagram

[FOLLOW US](#)

Join Departmental Events

[ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

University of Michigan
500 Church St, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Phone: 734.615.3275
E-mail: Weinberg-Institute@umich.edu