



Psychology and Neuroscience

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

2021 Award Winners

Undergraduate Awards

Imogene Jacobs Award for the Outstanding Junior in Psychology



Avery Brogle is a Psychology major and Honors student, minoring in French and Sociology with a perfect GPA. She is passionate about helping to solve the lack of justice and humanity in the US criminal justice system. This passion has driven her work in many ways: it has kept her motivated to succeed academically so that she can gain admission to law school, it has helped her focus her volunteer and service efforts, and it has shaped the topic of her upcoming Honors thesis, which investigates psychosocial mechanisms involved in pre-school disciplinary events. Dr. Mark Whisman and Dr. David Allen both speak highly of Avery's academic excellence, maturity, and admirable focus on issues of significant social importance. Congratulations, Avery!



Ziwei Cheng, also a student with a perfect GPA, is majoring in Psychology, Statistics and Data Science and Computer Science, and aspires to eventually pursue graduate studies in cognitive or clinical psychology. She is a research assistant in the RADD lab, and has worked in other research labs and in the Health Promotion office at CU. She has served as a Learning Assistant or data science classes, a tutor for freshmen, and a member of international student organizations. Her recommenders, Dr. Kaiser and Dr. Andrea Feldman note Ziwei's outstanding intellectual skills and conscientiousness, as well as her ability to function at a graduate student level in both research efforts and collaborative work with peers. Dr. Kaiser also expresses gratitude for Ziwei's important insights about the role of culture in research. Congratulations, Ziwei!

The Psychology Thesis Award



Rebekah Benjamin-Pollak

Honors Thesis: The Unexamined Variability Shared Between Personality and Study Habits: A Commonality Analysis of Academic Procrastination

Thesis Advisor: Akira Miyake

Rebekah examined the psychological variables that influence the pernicious and widespread phenomenon of procrastination. She identified failures in previous research and showed in her results that it is of vital importance that research use methods that identify the communality of variance shared by individual predictor variables. The honors thesis itself as well as the verbal presentation were of advanced graduate-level in their clarity, quality, and sophistication. The committee was impressed by the sophistication of the statistical analyses that she used and with her ability to talk about other topics related to her thesis: from the nitty-gritty technical aspects of the instruments she used, to the different possible interpretations of her finding, to the far-reaching implications of her work. Her conceptual representations (diagrams) of her statistical strategy are a model of pedagogic clarity. In addition, Rebekah willingly served as a resource to cohorts who were also preparing honors theses, helping them with writing, statistical analysis and polishing their presentations. Congratulations, Rebekah!

The Neuroscience Thesis Award



Philip Thorn Coleman

Honors Thesis: Stress Resilience and Social Dominance Engage a Common Neural Circuit

Thesis Advisor: Michael Baratta

Philip's research showed that social dominance and stress resilience share a common neural circuit, involving the pre-frontal cortex and the dorsomedial striatum. He also showed that repeated winning protected rats against stress-induced deficits. Philip mastered many different techniques in his research. He developed a novel social dominance task for rats (warm spot task) as well as using several other more well-established (though complex) behavioral techniques such as inescapable stress and juvenile social exploration. Philip's research paradigms have already been adopted by researchers in other laboratories. He also performed surgeries and assays to measure levels of endocrine and immune markers. His thesis has been submitted to the *Journal of Neuroscience* and is under review for publication. In addition, he has willingly helped other students over the past year with their own research and data analyses. Congratulations, Philip!

The Psychology/Neuroscience Leadership Award



Taylor Rivet is a Psychology major and Theater minor who is planning to study forensic psychology after she graduates from CU. Taylor notes that her experiences as a Latin American woman have helped her to value diversity in others, and have compassion for people who may not be able to advocate for themselves. While maintaining a perfect academic record, Taylor has been involved in Psychology club, where she serves as secretary, as well as other environmental, community organizations honor societies. She has held leadership positions in several of these organizations. Dr. Ryan Curtis notes that her leadership in the Psychology club has been a great asset to the club's efforts, and that she has been diligent about this role even during the current pandemic. Excellent work, Taylor!

The David E. Drutz Scholarship

Eric "Cody" Moxam, is majoring in Psychology and Music, and has a perfect GPA. He is particularly interested in the science of addiction and is involved in a number of extracurricular activities here, including the American Medical Student Association, Biochemistry Club and several other volunteer organizations connected to his interest in substance addiction and recovery. His recommender, Dr. Erik Knight, notes that Cody is an outstanding scholar whose focus on the intersection of social, cognitive, and clinical psychology will no doubt lead to a successful career as a research-practitioner. Well done, Cody!



Charlotte Psaila is another rising Junior and Psychology major. Charlotte is a non-traditional student who enrolled at CU after owning a small business in Hawaii for several years. She is supporting herself as she attends college, and still has time to work with Boulder youth through the Boulder County Youth Mentorship and volunteers with several other community organizations on top of working a nearly full-time job. Her recommender, Dr. Jennifer Stratford, applauds Charlotte's intelligence, attention to detail, dedication, and overall ability, as well as her generosity in terms of sharing her knowledge with her classmates. Congratulations, Charlotte!



Bryn Tillman is a Psychology and Art major, and holds excellent GPAs in both of those departments. Out of difficult experiences, Bryn found purpose and focus, and has maintained academic excellence while also participating in a number of extracurriculars and volunteer efforts. She is particularly focused on biological and cognitive psychology. Dr. David Allen's letter in support of Bryn's nomination pointed to her outstanding performance in his class, and notes that she is a young woman with many talents. Congratulations, Bryn!



Sophia Zaugg is a 1st generation college student and a rising Senior who is double majoring in Psychology and Communications. Sophia has also faced struggles but turned them into important areas of academic focus and volunteer efforts. She is a member of Psi Chi, CU student government, and several other volunteer efforts. She has also been a Resident Advisor at CU and has worked as a research assistant. She aspires to attend graduate school and pursue training that will allow her to help children and families. Dr. Jennifer Stratford notes that Sophia is a remarkably successful student who is already developing excellent research and leadership skills that will help her succeed in the future. Superb, Sophia!

The Bourne/Yaroush Award



Dheevena Bachu ("Dheenu") is a rising Junior in our department majoring in Neuroscience and Computer Science. She is particularly interested in investigating brain mechanisms involved in the impact of strokes on cognitive functioning and is hoping that studying neuroscience will help give her a better understanding of the gaps in current research on cognitive psychology. She is already a very accomplished student, has co-authored a publication, been an LA for calculus classes and is involved in research in Dr. Al Kim's lab. Her recommenders, Al Kim and Brandon Marquart, note that she is academically quite successful, engaged, and compassionate and is actively involved in volunteer work and student representation on campus. Congratulations, Dheena!



Carly Glasson is a rising Junior majoring in Psychology and Sociology and is also pursuing a Public Health certificate. She is interested in Forensic Psychology as well. Carly is a member of Psychology Honors program and the Psychology Club and participates in a number of other community service activities. Carly is an excellent student who is interested in thought processes, perceptions and judgment and decision-making in legal settings. Her recommenders, Drs. Rosi Kaiser and Greg Carey, both point out that Carly is an outstanding, talented, and bright student who succeeds in the most rigorous classes and exhibits great promise to succeed and contribute to the field. Congratulations, Carly!



Taylor Smith is an excellent student who is interested in studying the cognitive decline associated with dementia and Alzheimer's disease in particular. While maintaining an excellent GPA, Taylor is also active in Ultimate Frisbee as both a player and a coach, the Asian Unity club, Psychology and Neuroscience clubs, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association and several other organizations. Dr. Jennifer Stratford praises Taylor's intellectual acuity, leadership skills, passion for learning, excellent academic performance, and willingness to serve as an informal tutor to her classmates. Well done, Taylor!

Graduate Awards

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Outstanding Contribution to Basic Research

Hilary Traut was nominated by Drs. Yuko Munakata, Tim Curran, Marie Banich and Josh Correll for this award. Hilary is graduating from our program this spring. During her time at CU, she has spearheaded the development of an impressive program of research, with a number of publications in top-notch journals and presentations under her belt, investigating topics that no one else has investigated as thoroughly as she has. Her research is focused on executive functioning following brain injuries as well as how we might support these abilities through tailored trainings and interventions. She is committed to inclusivity, systematicity and transparency in research, and has responded with flexibility and resilience to her advisor leaving CU, and to the barriers to her research presented by the current pandemic. Congratulations, Hilary!

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Outstanding Contribution to Translational Research



Raeghan Mueller is also graduating from our program this spring. Her work in Dr. Kent Hutchinson's lab over the past 4 years combines neuroscience and psychological approaches and considers immunological and molecular mechanisms to investigate the risks and potential benefits of cannabis. Her diligence has led to a number of publications, presentations and awards for her work. Dr. Hutchinson applauds Raeghan's strong intellectual abilities and the potential that her work has for broad scientific impact. He also notes that Raeghan possesses the right mix of focus, intelligence, ambition, interpersonal skills and collaborativeness to make her an excellent translational scientist. Congratulations, Raeghan!

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Outstanding Teaching:

We had a record number of excellent nominations for this award, but ultimately the committee decided on two recipients:



Miriam Clayton Erickson Drs. Naomi Friedman and Josh Correll note that Miriam is an “incredible teacher who is already making huge contribution to the teaching mission of this department.” Miriam has TAd the graduate statistics sequence as well as a number of undergraduate research courses and has been Head TA for the department. More than most graduate students, Miriam has made a concerted effort to build pedagogical expertise by receiving training through the graduate teaching program, where she has completed the teaching certificate. Her students consistently praise her for being the best TA they’ve had during their time at CU. Miriam is focused on a teaching-focused career after finishing her Ph.D. here. We are fortunate to have Miriam’s excellent contributions to teaching in our department. Well done, Miriam!



Matt Hartsock has diligently focused on developing his teaching skills since he arrived at CU. He has been a TA for several Neuroscience classes and was appointed as the lead instructor for NRSC 2100 last fall. He is admired by students and faculty alike for his enthusiasm and expertise in teaching, communicativeness, diligence in preparing teaching materials, helpfulness, ability to engage students even over Zoom and attention to detail. His nearly perfect FCQ scores reflect his expertise in the classroom. Over the years, Matt has also put significant effort into mentoring students in neuroscience, including under-represented students and high school students. His recommenders, Drs. Watkins, Barratta, Spencer, Campeau, and Day, all note Matt’s outstanding abilities as a teacher. Congratulations, Matt!

Sean Hudson Leadership Award



Balbir Singh was nominated by the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Undergraduate Subcommittee (including Drs. Kaiser, Spencer, Whisman, Pittman Wagers and UG student Adela Aguirre) for his leadership and collaborative efforts in helping the committee develop the vision for a large-scale project aimed at providing DEI resources and professional development tools for undergraduate students. Balbir's ability to conceptualize and convey the content, overall vision and importance of this project will help the committee project succeed. Further, his understanding of the experiences of marginalized students and students of color has brought invaluable depth to the committee's work, and ultimately to DEI efforts in our department more broadly. Congratulations, Balbir!

Peter G. Ossorio Award



Bailey Steele was nominated by the Clinical area for this award. Bailey is a 2nd year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology program and her research interests focus on the interplay between intimate relationship functioning and mental health. She has already published a co-authored paper on the longitudinal association between relationship adjustment and psychopathology in a probability sample of active-duty soldiers in the US Army in *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, which is one of the premier journals in clinical psychology. She is working on several other papers based on her research that will be submitted for publication in the near future. She has also been presenting the results from her research at international conferences, including presenting several papers at the 2019 and 2020 annual conventions of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Well done, Bailey!