

SCHOOL OF NEUROSCIENCE
College Of Science

Class of
2020

Commencement Program
Saturday, May 16th, 2020



SCHOOL OF NEUROSCIENCE

Class of 2020

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Message from the Director

TO THE 2020 GRADUATES

Congratulations on your big day! I encourage you to celebrate your accomplishment and hope this graduation marks just the beginning of a lifelong journey of curiosity, discovery, leadership and service. Yes, you have earned your degree, but this is merely the stepping-stone for what is yet to come. Whatever your next endeavor may be, we know that you will succeed. What makes us so sure? Four years ago, you came to Virginia Tech fearless and determined to major in an emerging new scientific discipline. Possibly not fully grasping the field of Neuroscience and its scope, you have since learned about the inner workings of the brain; the brain-mind connection; you have learned to rely on data to make evidence-based decisions; you understand how human emotion is regulated by defined neurochemicals; you learned the volatility of memories, and became conversant in mechanisms of neurological illnesses. You learned how genes and the environment collaborate to shape human traits and personality. Most importantly, you have become a critical thinker and a person who is eager to impart on the world the power of knowledge.



Dr. Harald Sontheimer
I.D. Wilson Chair and Professor
Executive Director
School of Neuroscience

I leave you with one challenge and it is not a simple one: “Make a difference in the world.” Always ask for evidence and the data that supports decisions we make individually or in society. I know you will succeed. I thank you for choosing Neuroscience as your degree and share pride in your future accomplishments.

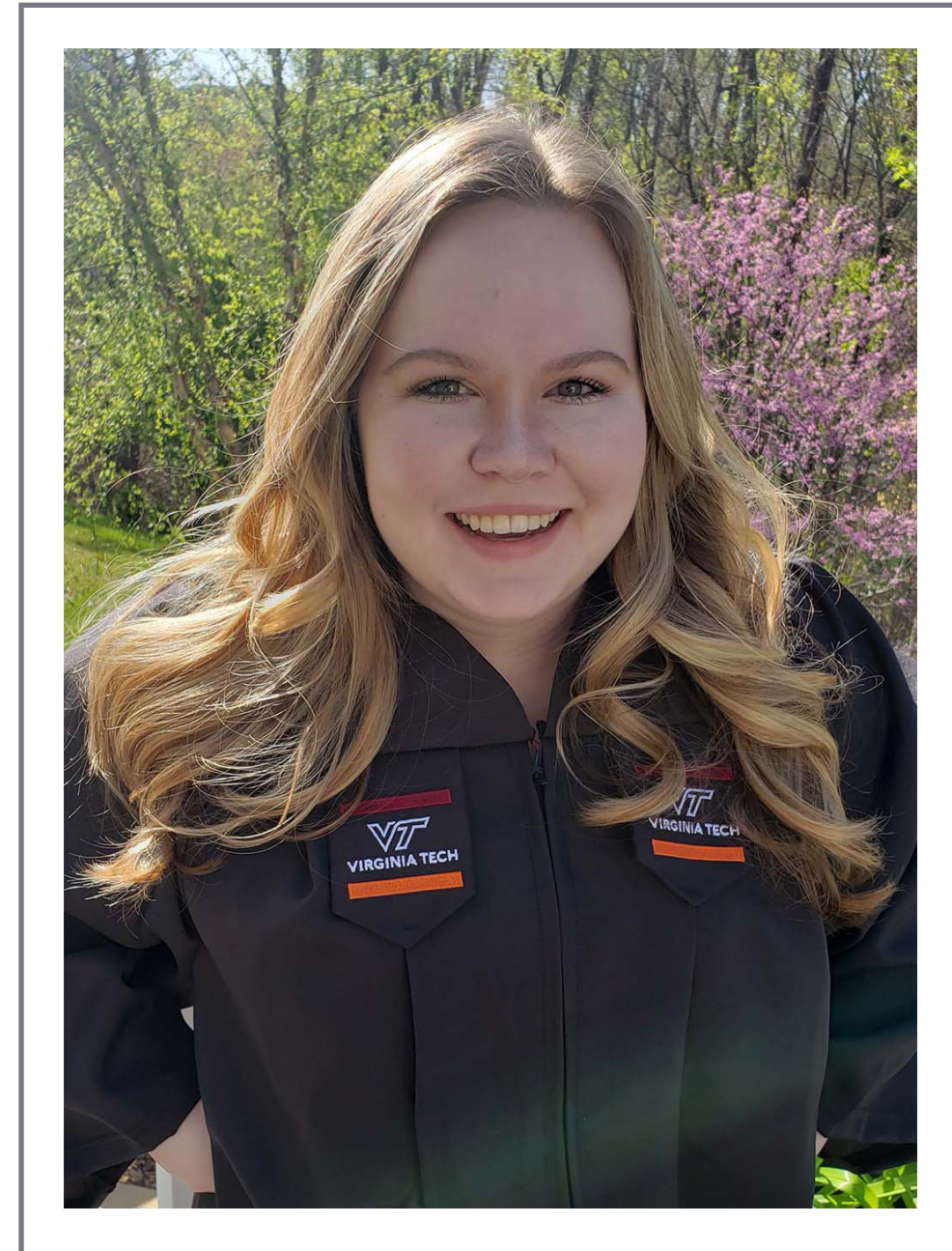
Good luck and congratulations.

Harald Sontheimer

Student Commencement Speakers

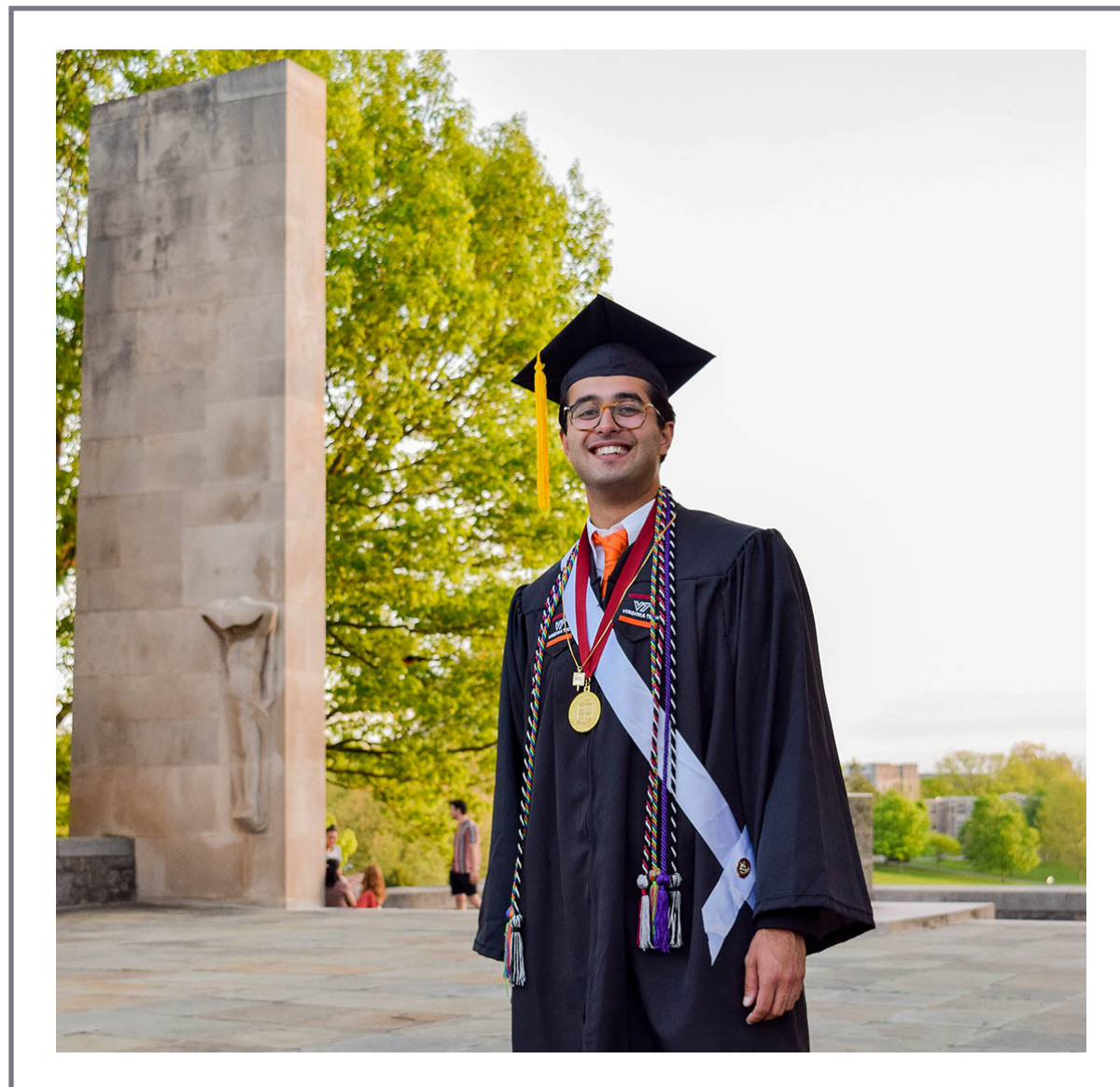
Lauren Haacke

Lauren is an Experimental Neuroscience major. She is the co-founder and President of the student organization Synapse, serves on the founding executive committee for Nu Rho Psi, has been an undergraduate researcher for the Sontheimer laboratory, and is a research ambassador the College of Science. Lauren was selected as Virginia Tech’s Undergraduate Student of the Year. She was also selected as a Fulbright Scholar. This fall she will be studying brain injury and regenerative medicine in Heidelberg, Germany.



Sidharth Madhavan

Sid is a Clinical Neuroscience major. He was an undergraduate researcher in laboratories of Dr. Matt Buczynski (Neuroscience) and Dr. Bin Xu (Biochemistry). Sid has presented his research at 9 different venues, is the recipient of several prestigious scholarships and fellowships, serves as the founding Vice President of Nu Rho Psi, and is among the first Ambassadors for the School of Neuroscience. This fall, Sid will begin graduate school at the University of Southern California - Buck Institute PhD program in the Biology of Aging. He was also recently awarded the USC Provost's Fellowship for showing outstanding promise in a career in academic research.



Awards and Special Recognitions

Mia Genuario

SCHOOL OF NEUROSCIENCE OUTSTANDING SENIOR AWARD

Rishi Devulapalli

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE OUTSTANDING SENIOR RESEARCH AWARD

Lauren Haacke

VIRGINIA TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT OF THE YEAR

The Outstanding Senior Award recognizes a student with outstanding performance in academics, extracurricular activities, leadership, and contributions to the university and/or community.

The Outstanding Senior Research Award recognizes a student with demonstrated excellence in undergraduate research.

The Undergraduate Student of the Year recognizes a graduating senior who has achieved overall excellence during their undergraduate career at Virginia Tech. This recognition is awarded to a student who has exceptional and balanced achievement in academics, leadership, and service.

Meet the Seniors

Oludamilola Adeshina
Gainesville, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Yea In Ahn
Annandale, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Malikah Imogene Ajose
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Erik Akbar
Chesterfield, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Maxwell Amoako
Manassas, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Zoe Anderson
Earlysville, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Megan Nicole Ansley
Alexandria, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Ashwin Arora
Vienna, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meghan Babington
Sterling, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Katie Marie Barnes
Ronceverte, WV
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Robert Gates Bass III
Midlothian, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Ben Batman
Monroe, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kourtney A Baumfalk
Richmond, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jennifer Leigh Beauchamp
West Chester, PA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Noralee Beecroft
Woodbridge, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sara Belay
Washington, DC
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Matthew David Bergstresser
Charlottesville, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Riyanka Bhavsar
Aldie, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Hannah Elizabeth Bird
Chesapeake, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Amanda Lee Blattel
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Katelyn Sue Bolt
Front Royal, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Taylor Boyd
Severna Park, MD
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Taylor Audrey Briscoe
Manassas, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Caitlin Elizabeth Brnich
Newport News, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Savannah Kay Brooks
Mineral, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Abby Brown
Annapolis, MD
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Chelsea Buhler
New York, NY
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sofia Daniela Cadena Coro
Tyson's Corner, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sara Hope Carbaugh
Bluefield, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Katherine Carnivale
McMurray, PA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meghan Elizabeth Casey
Laurel Springs, NJ
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Cameron Elise Cashwell
Virginia Beach, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Emma Rae Casto
Staunton, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Gabriel M. Coleman
Mobile, AL
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Mikayla Ann Colt
Chesterfield, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Elle Cornman
Midlothian, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Carolyn Mikaela Cox
Abingdon, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kathryn Creighton
Charlottesville, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Francesca Czesak
Wappingers Falls, NY
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Hayden Davidson
Chesapeake, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Caroline Dana de Jager
Williamsburg, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Lake Deane
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Shoa L. Deese
Pembroke, NC
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Rishi Kashyap Devulapalli
Ashburn, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Nistha Dube
Firfax, VA

COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kristina N. East
Memphis, TN
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Mariana Escalante
Ashburn, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Caitlin Stephanie Fanning
Bland, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Robby Feconda
Leesburg, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Caitlyn Finn
Chesapeake, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Serena Lynn Fleming
Ashburn, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Megan Nicole Fricke
Clayton NC
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Alexandra Marie Gauthier
Woodbridge VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Mia Christine Genuario
Alexandria, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Elisabeth Ann George
Sterling, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Tezeta Geatenet Gessesse
Springfield, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Daniela Victoria Gil
Woodbridge, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Emma Rose Gnatowski
Potomac Falls, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jarred Michael Green
Chesapeake, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Lauren Guttman
Sterling VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Lauren Kay Haacke
Lorton, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Taha Hassad
Arlington, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Dylan Hawley
Reston, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Rachel A Heid
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Katie Hogge
Clifton, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Emily Hudson Hurst
Rocky Mount, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Brianna Janocha
Middletown, DE
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Ian Jeffers
Fredericksburg, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Dillon Jenkins
Emporia, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Pierce Emerson Jennings
Arlington, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Dana Eligia Johnson
Bronx, NY
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Morgan Johnson
Leonardo, NJ
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Natalie Jones
Annandale, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Seok Min Kim
Vienna, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Abigail C Kirkpatrick
Robbinsville, NJ
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

William Klockner
Acton, MA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Evelyn Ann Koon
Potomac Falls, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Lisa Kripowicz
Manassas, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Jordan Landry
Chesapeake, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Bhavya Lankipalli
Cary, NC
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Alexis Elaine Gelacio Lapid
Virginia Beach, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Madison Lee
Falls Church, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Ian Levine
Orlando, FL
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Nadia Monique Lewis
Richmond, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Drew Lisenbee
Atlantab, GA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sidharth Madhavan
Springfield, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kayley Manarchuck
Burke, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Elizabeth Maquera
Springfield, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Anoo Maskeri
Vienna, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Samantha Ann McChesney
Kirkland, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Michael Justus McGregor
King George, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Reagan Meyers
Moneta, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Shannon Noel Morriscal
Chantilly, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Rebecca Mueller
Roanoke, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jamie Lea Mustian
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Ryan Nasser
Woodbridge, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jacob L. Nelsen
Harrisburg, PA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kyle Nickel
Harrisonburg, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Madison Rose Noble
Mechanicsville, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Madeline O'Brien
Vienna, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Neha Ogale
Ashburn VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jared Akira Okada
Fairfax, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Valeria Ortiz Gareca
Lorton, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Mariam Nicole Ouattara
Ashburn, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Alexis Nicole Pagán
Chesapeake, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Shriti Pant
Chantilly, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kyra Parker
Alexandria, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Nicole Lorraine Peritz
York, PA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Madison Grace Philhower
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Nikita Pike
Reston, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Carolyn Nicole Pollock
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Carly Porter
Radford, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kayla Purcell
Millington, NJ
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Najwa Qadeer
Stafford, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kylie Ream
Haymarket, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Julianne Elizabeth Reilly
New Canaan, CT
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sasha Marie Reynolds
Vienna, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Alexandra Nicole Rhodes
Chantilly, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Giselle Nicole Rivero Ballon
Sterling, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Daniel Ro
Oakton, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Forrest J. Robertson
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Tanmaya Rodda
Manassas, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Lorin Tyler Roemhildt
Midlothian, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Amy Elizabeth Sabet
Chesterfield, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Eric Sanderlin
Richmond, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Taylor Nicole Schaefer
Stafford, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Nikita Nanna Schroll-McLaughlin
Leesburg, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Chase Robert Schulte
Burke, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kemper Evan Scott
Bent Mountain, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Meghan Walker Sedovy
Lexington, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

David Sellers
Hillsville, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Ana Shaffi
Waterford, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Pooja Shethna
Burke, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Claire Louise Shifflett
Warrenton, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Rachel Violetta Silver
Chesterfield County, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Alathea Joy Smith
Manassas, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Erynn Sorensen
Norfolk, VA
COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Julia Sorg
Flemington, NJ
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Jessica Marye Spicer
Bahama, NC
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Nicole Louise Spiezio
Silver Spring, MD
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Amber Elise Stephens
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Michaela Grace Stevens
North Dinwiddie, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Sameera Sunkara
Ashburn, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Rithika Surineni
Ashburn, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Erica Song Townsend
Fairfax Station, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Colleen Margaret Valentine
Chester, NJ
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Katie Van Nuys
Leesburg, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Wilhelm Harry Venitz
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Maria Villafuerte
Arlington, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Rachael Elizabeth Ward
Vienna, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Alexandra Warren
Manasquan, NJ
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Lauren Weaver
Pasadena, MD
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Addison Nicole Webster
Chesapeake, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Abigael Rae Weit
Lititz, PA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meet the Seniors

Hannah Eloise Wilding
Pittsburgh, PA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Ryan Williams
Roanoke, VA
EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Meredith K Wilson
Richmond, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Mollie McKenzie Woods
Roanoke, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Kristina Woodward
Reston, VA
COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

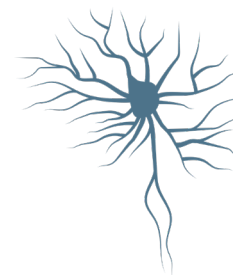
Sarah Victoria Woolverton
Winchester, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Taylor Marie Wynne
Virginia Beach, VA
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE



Information about our Majors

Students in the School of Neuroscience program learn directly from experts in the field about advances in genetic, cellular, molecular, cognitive and systems Neuroscience.



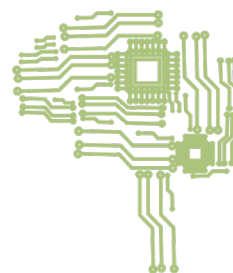
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE

Graduates of the Clinical Neuroscience major have completed a curriculum that promotes a detailed understanding of genetic, cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying diseases and disorders of the nervous system. Several Clinical Neuroscience courses emphasize the translation of research findings into clinical practice and the role and responsibility that health care plays in society.



COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

Graduates of the Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience major have completed a curriculum that focuses on thought processes in humans. These students have explored a wide array of topics including sensory and motor systems, learning, memory, decision-making, language, sleep, mood, awareness, and attention.



COMPUTATIONAL AND SYSTEMS NEUROSCIENCE

Graduates of the Computational and Systems Neuroscience major have undertaken an interdisciplinary branch of Neuroscience that incorporates theoretical and experimental approaches to understand the brain. Graduates from this major have explored tools and techniques that neuroscientists use to make sense of vast data in hope of finding solutions to neurological diseases as well as understanding processes such as decision-making, addiction, motivation, and more.



EXPERIMENTAL NEUROSCIENCE

Graduates of the Experimental Neuroscience major have completed a curriculum that prepares students for a hands-on career in science or science education. These graduates have gained a comprehensive understanding of genes, molecules, and cells that are the building blocks of the brain. Furthermore, many Experimental Neuroscience students have taken part in undergraduate research.

Commencement Keynote Speaker

Georgia Hodes

Dr. Hodes' work in mice and human subjects identifies the underlying biology that contributes to vulnerability and resilience to stress and mood disorders respectively. She is interested in understanding how the sex of an individual contributes to their susceptibility to stress and depression. Her goal is to develop novel personalized treatments and bioassays for mental illness so these disorders can be medically diagnosed and treated effectively.

Dr. Hodes' initial education was in the liberal arts. She received a B.A. in Drama/Dance from Bard College and worked as an actor and a designer in New York City. In 1999, she went back to school and obtained post-baccalaureate training at Hunter College in order to pursue a graduate degree in Neuroscience. At Hunter she experienced her first foray into research studying sensory behavior in electric catfish at the American Museum of Natural History and mirror self recognition in Beluga whales at the New York Aquarium. Dr. Hodes was accepted into the laboratory of Dr. Tracey Shors at Rutgers University in 2001. She received her Ph.D. from the Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience division of the Psychology program in 2007. At Rutgers University her research explored sex differences in the effects of stress on learning and brain plasticity across the lifespan. In 2007, she began postdoctoral training in Pharmacology with Dr. Irwin Lucki at the University of Pennsylvania examining the contribution of growth factors and adult neurogenesis to genetic and sex differences in vulnerability to stress. In 2010, she joined the laboratory of Dr. Scott Russo as a post-doctoral fellow for training in molecular neuroscience. Her work at Mt. Sinai focused on neuro-immunological and epigenetic mechanisms contributing to individual differences in stress susceptibility. In 2013, she received a postdoctoral NARSAD young investigator award to examine the role of the cytokine Interleukin-6 in stress susceptibility. In 2015, she was promoted to Assistant Professor at Mt. Sinai. In 2016, she left Mt. Sinai to join the newly formed School of Neuroscience at Virginia Tech as an Assistant professor where she received a second NARSAD young investigator award to examine sex differences in the effects of stress on the peripheral immune system. She is an author of over 50 scientific papers and has contributed to 3 different textbooks. She currently runs her own research laboratory at Virginia Tech examining how sex differences in the immune system interact with the brain to drive behavioral differences in susceptibility and resiliency to stress.



Georgia Hodes
Assistant Professor,
School of Neuroscience

ALUMNI

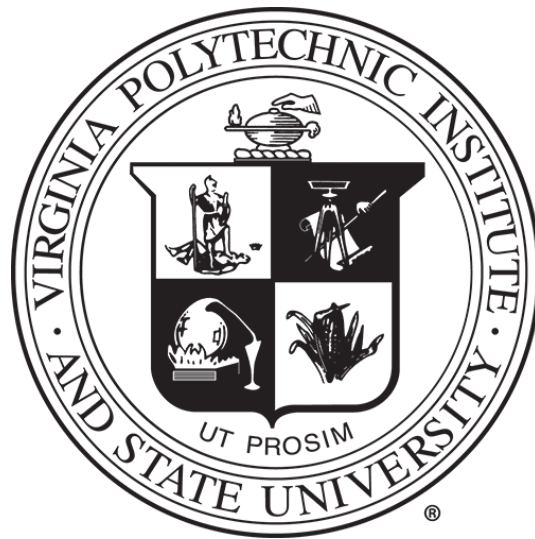
Stay engaged within the School and continue to be involved with Virginia Tech community.

Learn about alumni: <https://www.alumni.vt.edu/>

Join the School of Neuroscience LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8633446/>



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SCHOOL OF NEUROSCIENCE
VIRGINIA TECH.



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<https://neuroscience.vt.edu>



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