

Cognitive Science at Lehigh

Spring 2021

Director's Corner



Well, we've made it through an entire academic year of remote teaching and learning. I'm proud to say that all seven of our seniors designed and carried out their senior research projects (including four that were Honors theses) very successfully by adapting to the remote format. They met with their advisers through Zoom and collected and analyzed data on-line. While Zoom provided an amazing way to manage the circumstances, needless to say, it will be a relief to be back on campus in the fall. (Fingers crossed that nothing happens to disrupt that plan).

Meanwhile, despite the challenging times, the major has continued to grow. Along with 11 rising seniors, sixteen members of the class of '23 and 11 of the class of '24 are currently declared, and our '24 numbers will most likely grow as more students declare a major in their sophomore year. Many of these students we have only talked to through the camera lens, so it will be great to finally really meet. It felt surprising and a bit strange (in a good way) to bump into several students on campus in May and make a connection outside of Zoomland.

We are very honored and grateful to have received donations to the program from two Lehigh alumni this spring. Their contributions, we think, reflects their belief in the value of a Cognitive Science degree in today's world.



Image credit: Freepik.com

Student Spotlight

Meet Jane Levin '21, one of this year's graduating seniors. Jane majored in Cognitive Science with a minor in Psychology. Jane was attracted to Cognitive Science because she wanted to be exposed to all the different aspects of minds and brains from artificial intelligence to neuroscience and more. She was able to find out what she was most interested in through the flexibility and interdisciplinary nature of the major. Jane worked in Prof. Nancy Carlisle's lab for the majority of her Lehigh career, focusing on research in the area of visual attention and control. For her honors thesis project, Jane looked at the impact of location on cognitive control, evaluating whether the brain subconsciously expects certain objects to be associated with particular locations and therefore can respond more quickly.

After Lehigh, Jane will be attending a doctoral program in combined school-clinical child psychology, and she hopes to become a pediatric neuropsychologist. When applying to graduate schools, Jane had concerns about whether her major would be seen as a negative since applicants to these types of programs tend to be Psychology majors. However, she discovered that admissions committees looked favorably on her background and especially her programming skills. Jane's favorite experience in the Cognitive Science major has been how individualized the program is and being able to take classes in many disciplines.

A fun fact is that Jane was the captain of the Lehigh University Dance Team and also a member of the Lehigh University Philharmonic Orchestra!



News & Events

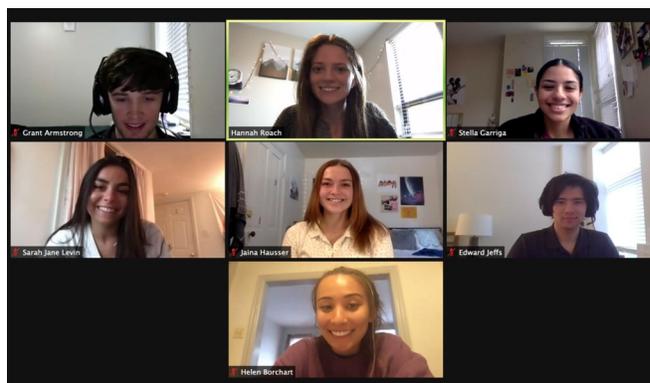


Wrap-up at the alumni panel, from top left: Max Smith '15, social media assistant McKenzie Dominick '22, director Prof. Barbara Malt, Troy Hendry '00, Joelle Dorskind '13, Melissa Greene '12, and our program's first director, Prof. Emeritus Ed Kay.

In early February we were delighted to have four Lehigh Cog Sci alums join us via Zoom for a panel presentation and discussion with our current majors. Panelists included Troy Hendry, '00, Melissa Greene '12, Joelle Dorskind '13, and Max Smith '15. Our four panelists followed diverse paths, with Troy working on information infrastructure, Max as a global product marketing manager, Joelle pursuing a Ph.D. in neuroscience, and Melissa working in user experience. Please read more about their careers and interests [here](#), and see the profile on Melissa below. The stories of their trajectories from Lehigh to their current positions were fascinating, with many twists and turns. They all spoke of how Cognitive Science helped shape their interests and career paths.

Seniors finished out their research projects with presentations of their results on May 10. From top left: Grant Armstrong, Hannah Roach, Stella Garriga, Jane Levin, Jaina Hausser, Eddie Jeffs, and Helen Borchart.

Hmm, a year ago it was so strange and new to hear the senior talks via Zoom and share their picture in Brady Bunch boxes; now it's a way of life.



Spotlight on Alumni

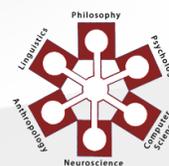


Meet Melissa Green '12! Melissa majored in Cognitive Science with a minor in clinical psychology, graduating cum laude and with departmental honors. Melissa currently works as a User Experience Researcher at Sopheon, focusing on how humans interact with products. Her path from Lehigh to Sopheon included several more degrees. After Lehigh, Melissa completed a Master of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering at the University of Buffalo with a focus on human-centered design. She then earned a Ph.D. in Design Science, studying engineering design cognition, with an emphasis on systems thinking and design thinking in systems engineering. This background led naturally to her current research in

user experience design. She analyzes consumer behavior to identify goals and challenges, model tasks and workflows, and form data-driven insights to address the needs of consumers. She then works with UX designers, engineers, and product managers to make software that is as easy to use as possible. She finds that her background in Cognitive Science is widely respected and appreciated in the field.



Cognitive Science:
The Interdisciplinary
Study of Mind



Cognitive Science Program

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