

Editors



Thiya Ilankovan

Thiya is a sophomore at UIUC majoring in MCB with a minor in Psychology, hoping to one day become a Physician Assistant. In her free time, she likes to run, crochet, and play the piano. She is currently involved in research at the Liang Lab for Behavioral Neuroscience. Through her involvement with Brain Matters, she hopes to broaden her knowledge and gain deeper insights into the fields of neuroscience and psychology.



Kathryn Kennedy

Kathryn Kennedy is a freshman studying Biology with minors in Health Technology and Spanish. She joined Brain Matters to learn more about neuroscience, psychology, and improve her writing and editing skills. Outside of the journal, she is involved in Global Medical Training and Education and Training 4 Health. She also dances with PSA Barkada, sings with the St. John's church choir, and plays guitar in her free time. Her career goal is to be a pediatrician.



Nicholas Opiola

Nicholas Opiola is a recent '24 MCB alumni. He is a lifelong learner and has always loved studying across all academic disciplines, especially neuroscience! Nicholas joined Brain Matters to immerse himself in all the latest exciting work being performed in the field of neuroscience and to utilize his writing skills towards helping others produce their best work. In his free time, Nicholas loves to watch fútbol, dance, sing karaoke, spend time with family and close friends, play video games, and spend time amongst nature. In the future, Nicholas hopes to devote his career towards making a lasting, positive change in as many lives as possible.



Megan Lu

Megan Lu is a Junior majoring in Brain & Cognitive Science with a minor in Health Administration and Business. She is involved in various RSOs on campus, including FHCE (Future Healthcare Executives) and Alpha Epsilon Delta (a pre-health fraternity). She is also currently involved in research with the Illinois Alternative Protein Project. In her free time, Megan spends most of her time at the gym working out, cooking new recipes, or listening to true crime podcasts. She hopes to deepen her understanding and appreciation of the brain through writing with Brain Matters and will graduate this year.



Yuliia Kohut

Yuliia Kohut is a Freshman in Bioengineering on a pre-medical track and a student from Ukraine. Apart from Brain Matters, on campus she is a Global Health executive member in the American Medical Student Association, and she is also a student volunteer at Carle Hospital. Yuliia is an undergraduate researcher in Dr. Best-Popescu lab at Beckman Institute, working on developing imaging tools for cellular neuroscience research. In her free time Yuliia enjoys cross-stitching, cooking Ukrainian food, and reading sci-fi novels. She joined the editing and writing team of Brain Matters to share her fascination with neuroscience with UIUC!



Kaitlyn Tuvilla

Kaitlyn Tuvilla is a junior in Bioengineering with a Statistics minor. She is an undergraduate research assistant for Bhargava Lab and I² Lab. Besides Brain Matters, Kaitlyn is involved with SWE, WIE, and BMES. In her spare time, she enjoys baking and running with her friends.



Gus Dorman

Gus Dorman is a freshman majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Computer Science. He joined Brain Matters as an editor to learn more about the field while also getting a feel for what research articles are like. If he's not studying, he's probably longboarding around campus, playing a video game, or watching shows.



Praise Kim

Praise Kim is the Vice President of Brain Matters and an undergraduate researcher pursuing a BSLAS in Brain and Cognitive Science. Currently, as a research assistant in the Gratton Lab, she studies the Fronto-Parietal Network in cognitive control tasks across different mental states. In the past, she has also presented work on the infant parasympathetic response and maternal depression with the Interdisciplinary Lab for Social Development. She is broadly interested in cognition in the brain and throughout development, also presenting work on social cognitive development at Stanford University. Outside of research, she lifts weights, reads fantasy novels, and spends time with her church. Her future goals are to continue researching the brain—whether as a post-bacc, doctoral student, post-doc, or professor.



Jessica Chen

Jessica Chen is a sophomore studying clinical-community psychology. With Brain Matters, she has been excited to integrate her interests in neuroscience, linguistics, and psychology. She has appreciated groundbreaking applications of neuroscience in skill acquisition, discrimination, addiction, and more. Currently a research assistant with the Health Equity and Action Lab and the Social Cognition Lab, Jessica examines parenting and child health outcomes across cultural contexts, and neural network dissection of trends in biases. Aside from academics, Jessica is most likely baking a sweet treat or lounging at a matcha cafe.



Natalia Pacheco

Natalia is a Freshman at the University of Illinois majoring in Neuroscience. Natalia became involved in Brain Matters to further her passion for the brain and to become familiar with modern topics of neuroscience. In addition to Brain Matters, Natalia is involved in the American Medical Women's Association at the University of Illinois. Natalia hopes to continue her studies in the medical field specifically with neurology to continue learning about the brain!

