

What's new at school? It's Dr. Hannah Carlson

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Dr. Hannah Carlson is a newly hired professor of neuroscience here at Lake Forest College. Despite being at LFC for such a short period, Carlson has managed to integrate herself seamlessly into the campus environment.

Dr. Carlson attended Wake Forest, where she obtained her MA in psychology and PhD in neuroscience. She then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Davidson's College. She originally intended to pursue a career in medicine, however, after teaching classes as a TA, Carlson realized her true calling lay in teaching and studying neuroscience and psychology. Her aptitude for teaching is evident from her first lecture at LFC where students voted her as the best fit for hire.

Her proficiency in teaching remains true in her current classes. As a student currently taking NEUR302: Neuroscience: Brain to Behavior with Dr. Carlson, I find that she manages to teach complex topics in both lab and lecture in a way that is not only easily understandable but also engaging and enjoyable. I look forward to continuing to learn from her in the class and encourage anyone attending Lake Forest to consider taking a class with her in the future. Still, even if you do not take a class with Dr. Carlson, you can see her and her two adorable dogs, Buddy and Byron, walking through campus.

In fall 2024, she will teach NEUR 302, and in spring 2025, she will teach both PSYC 320: Learning and a senior seminar on substance use and addiction. When interviewed, Dr. Carlson expressed interest in teaching classes related to learning. She mentioned possibly teaching a first-year studies course regarding psychology and horror movies, so be sure to watch for any classes she may teach in the future.



Dr. Carlson has done research primarily on the psychology and neurology surrounding substance use. This research includes the effects of substances and the initial decision-making behind the behavior. Notably, for her postdoctoral studies, she investigated the use and effects of combined fentanyl and xylazine. She found the combination to not only be more lethal than its components but also to have a more severe withdrawal. If topics such as these interest

you, then I have great news for you! Dr. Carlson is interested in continuing research on drug use at LFC and hopes to continue research in the spring.

When I asked Dr. Carlson what inspired her interest in neuroscience and psychology, she responded that her fascination with how people think and experience the world around them pulled her into the discipline. This curiosity of the mind encouraged many of her interests, such as Dungeons and Dragons and Lord of the Rings. It is an answer I believe many in the psychology and neuroscience departments can relate to. It motivates a common question for all: why do you study your field?

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