SANS

Social & Affective Neuroscience Society

18th Annual Conference

April 15 - 18, 2026
San Diego, California, USA

socialaffectiveneuro.org | #SANS2026 | @sansmeeting.bsky.social

SANS 2026 Conference Program-At-A-Glance

	Wednesday April 15, 2026			Thursday April 16, 2026		Friday April 17, 2026	Saturday April 18, 2026
8:00				Mentor Match Event			
8:15						BIOPAC Presentation	
8:30							Symposium 4 Naturalistic hyperscanning: Mechanisms, plasticity, and network complexity
8:45							
9:00				Opening Session & Welcome Address			
9:15						Symposium 3 Affect & Decision-Making	
9:30				Symposium 1 New Directions in Social Learning & Memory			
9:45							Refreshment Break
10:00							
10:15							Symposium 5 Advancing emotion regulation research: Neural mechanisms and translational applications
10:30						EDIJ Session	
10:45				Early Career Awardee Talk			
11:00							
11:15				Symposium 2 Clinical and Translational Perspectives on Affect			
11:30							Faculty Blitz Talks
11:45						Trainee Blitz Talks	
12:00							
12:15							
12:30				NIH Roundtable (Pre ordered lunch)	Lunch (on your own)		
12:45							
13:00	13:00 - 17:00 Pre -Conference Workshop Navigating The fMRI Multiverse	13:00 - 17:00 Pre-Conference Workshop Building a Thriving Research Career				Lunch Break (on your own)	Lunch Break (on your own)
13:15							
13:30				SANS Fellow Introduction & Blitz Talks			
13:45							
14:00			14:00-18:00 Pre -Conference Workshop SANS Investigators Summit on Funding and Resources	Presidential Speaker Steve Chang			Poster Spotlight 3
14:15							
14:30						MID Career Awardee Talk	
14:45							Poster Session 3
15:00				Poster Spotlight 1		Keynote Talk Elizabeth Phelps	
15:15							
15:30				Poster Session 1 and Opening Reception			
15:45						Poster Spotlight 2	
16:00							Distinguished Scholar Awardee Talk
16:15							
16:30						Poster Session 2	
16:45							
17:00				"Comic SANS"			Closing Remarks & Annoucements SANS Business Meeting
17:15							
17:30							
17:45						EDIJ Social Hour Meet Up Eureka Restaurant	
18:00							
18:15							
18:30							
18:45						SANS Social Meet Up Eureka Restaurant	
19:00							
19:30							
19:45							

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About the Society

The Social & Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS) is committed to research investigating the neural basis of social and affective processes. The Society was founded in 2008 and now comprises over 300 members.

Welcome
to the 18th annual SANS Conference

Dear SANS Members and Attendees,

Welcome to the 18th Annual Meeting of the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS)! This year brings us back to the west coast and the sunny shores of San Diego. A city known for its deep cultural history, stunning beaches, perfect weather, and––of course––the legendary Ron Burgundy, San Diego provides the perfect setting for our community to gather, (re)connect and explore the cutting-edge work driving our field in new directions.

I am incredibly excited about this year's program. I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to our Conference Co-Chairs, Candace Raio (NYU Grossman School of Medicine) and M. Justin Kim (Sungkyunkwan University) and to the program committee–Peter Sokol-Hessner (University of Denver), Nina Lauharatanahirun (Penn State University), Jaime Castrellon (University of California, Los Angeles), Shuo Wang (Washington University in St. Louis) and Katie Insel (Northwestern University). They have meticulously cultivated a truly unique experience featuring two pre-conferences, interdisciplinary symposia, an NIH panel and more.

I think it is a bit of an understatement to say that we are living in extraordinary times right now as social and affective neuroscientists that call for new ideas and strategies for ensuring the sustainability of our field. I would like to thank our Past-President, Ajay Satpute, for his vision in organizing the first-ever SANS Investigators Summit on Funding and Resources. The goal of this event was to bring together PIs from across our field to discuss novel ways in which we can build and share community wide resources, continue to provide support and guidance to our trainees in the current environment and more.

The output of the Summit will be discussed during our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice (EDIJ) Session. The EDIJ Committee, led by Damian Stanley (Adelphi University), has organized a critical session this year focusing on the impacts felt by the SANS community in this shifting scientific landscape in the US. The session will facilitate vital discussions on how we can navigate these challenges together as a community. The EDIJ session will also celebrate the winners of our Diversity Travel Awards––supported by the T & C Chen Center for Social and Decision Neuroscience at Caltech––who will showcase their work in flash talks.

We are also thrilled and grateful to have representatives from NIH returning to SANS in 2026 for a lunch panel, during which program officers will be speaking with our community about current agency priorities and funding opportunities. I would like to express thanks to Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz (OBSSR), Neel Dhruv (NINDS), Layla Esposito (NICHHD), Emily Hooker (NIA), Liz Necka (NIMH) and Matt Sutterer (NIA) for joining us this year. This is certain to be an agenda-setting session for our field.

Our Trainee Committee, led by Hongbo Yu (University of California, Santa Barbara) continues to foster the future of our field. The Mentor-Mentee Match Event––generously sponsored again by NIRx––is now in its third year and has become a staple of SANS where trainees can network with faculty and PIs in a lively and informal setting (with the help of lots of coffee at 8am!). Thank you, Hongbo, for spearheading the creation of this important part of our meeting.

This year also marks a milestone, as it is the inaugural year of the SANS Fellows Program, conceived of by our current Vice President Jeni Kubota. We are proud to recognize our first cohort of SANS Fellows: Chelsea Helion (Temple University), Kristen Lindquist (The Ohio State University), Abigail Marsh (Georgetown University),

Welcome

David Smith (Temple University), Shuo Wang (Washington University in St. Louis), and Rene Weber (University of California, Santa Barbara), as SANS Fellows. Don't miss the Fellows Blitz session immediately following the NIH Lunch panel to hear about some of their most recent findings!

We are also honored to have trailblazers in social and affective neuroscience headlining this year's program. Elizabeth Phelps (Harvard University) will deliver our Keynote Address on the amygdala, threat and anxiety, and Steve Chang (Yale University) will speak at our Presidential Symposium on social decision-making. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate our 2026 award winners, who will each share highlights of their research programs––Elisa Baek (Early Career Award; University of Southern California), Shuo Wang (Mid Career Award; Washington University in St. Louis) and John O'Doherty (Distinguished Scholar Award; Caltech). We are also thrilled to give out the first ever SANS Service Award to Kateri McRae (University of Denver) for her tireless dedication to the success of SANS over the years.

Our meeting would not be possible without the support of our partners and exhibitors. I'd like to thank our Silver Level Sponsors––BIOPAC, NIRx and the T & C Chen Center for Social and Decision Neuroscience at Caltech, our Bronze Level Sponsors––Temple University and Lakeside Entertainment Group––as well as the Columbia University, University of Maryland, and the Department of Psychology and the Gordon F. Derner School of Psychology at Adelphi University for their generosity in supporting our meeting this year. Please make sure you visit all of our returning and first-time exhibitors–– Wearable Sensing, mBrainTrain, BrainVision––to learn about the latest tools supporting social and affective neuroscience, and don't miss a special BIOPAC workshop on Friday morning on multimodal data collection where they will demo some of their new cutting-edge equipment!

As if all of that weren't enough––what would SANS be without socializing? Given that San Diego is the home of Comic-Con International, it is only fitting that this year brings us the 3rd annual edition of Comic SANS, with Deepu Murty (University of Oregon) returning as host! I can't wait to see what he has in store for us this time around (though I'm admittedly also a little scared…), and I also look forward to seeing everyone at the EDIJ Social Hour and the SANS Social on Friday, both just a few minutes away from the hotel at Eureka!

In closing, this year's meeting is evidence to me of the strength and enduring nature of our field and community. The work of our membership is perhaps more important than ever as it seems that every day we are confronted by new challenges and affronts to science and medicine, efforts to minimize the importance of diversity and inclusion, and growing barriers to international collaboration and threats to mental health. Yet, by gathering together here this week, we have the opportunity to take a stand by engaging in scientific discourse, sharing ideas, celebrating the diversity of science and of our membership, and promoting all of the things that make SANS such an amazing community. With that, I encourage you to make the most of your time in San Diego. Visit posters outside of your area of interest. Trainees––introduce yourself to a PI whom you admire but have never met. PIs––make time not just for those colleagues and friends whom you haven't seen in some time, but for the next generation of social and affective neuroscientists who will need your guidance as they grow up in this new era of science.

Dominic Fareri
President

Awards

SANS Service Award

The Social and Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS) is honored to launch a special recognition award. We invite nominations for the SANS Service Award, honoring individuals whose sustained and exceptional contributions have strengthened both the field of social and affective neuroscience and the SANS community. This award celebrates those whose leadership, mentorship, and advocacy have advanced the science, broadened participation, and enhanced the infrastructure and visibility of our field.

Kateri McRae

Professor & Chair, Department of Psychology, University of Denver

2026 SANS Inaugural Service Award Recipient

Kateri McRae is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver. She has spent her career characterizing neural systems that support cognition and emotion. She has identified the principles that govern these neural systems to improve our understanding of effective emotion regulation. More specifically, she has demonstrated how using shifts in interpretation and perspective can improve our emotional well-being, an emotion regulation strategy known as cognitive reappraisal. Reappraisal is a generally effective, self-driven emotion regulation strategy, and is a powerful tool to fuel hope and persistence in the face of an uncontrollable, harmful environment. Her recent research has characterized different types of reappraisal (e.g., reinterpreting the present, focusing on the future, accepting the situation) and teasing apart the generation of alternative appraisals from implementation and elaboration. Dr. McRae considers her research on emotion regulation and emotional well-being as inextricable from what most people consider teaching and service responsibilities. She teaches a first-year seminar called, “Exploring Psychology Through Theater” and has co-authored a forthcoming book on the psychology of acting, The Actor’s Mind. She has been an academic advisor, faculty advising director, DU’s 4D faculty fellow for well-being, and department chair, roles for which knowledge of emotion regulation has been critical. She is obsessed with discerning what we can change, and what we cannot (in the brain, in life). While we can’t control the world, we can control our local environment, invest in communities we care about (like SANS), and offer perspective and interpretation shifts to one another – and she has data to show that can make a real difference.

Awards

Distinguished Scholar Award

The Distinguished Scholar Award recognizes the broad scope and potentially integrative nature of scholarship in social and affective neuroscience. It honors a scholar who has made distinctively valuable research contributions across their career in areas by significantly advancing our understanding of the biological basis of social and affective processes or expanding the core of social and affective neuroscience discipline.

John P. O'Doherty

Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA

2026 Distinguished Scholar Award Winner

John O'Doherty studies the computational and cognitive neuroscience of learning and decision making. His primary methodologies include computational modeling, behavioral analysis, neuroimaging, and human electrophysiology. His research focuses on how the brain encodes the value of stimuli, states, and actions to support adaptive decision-making and behavior. This work includes investigating the mechanisms that underlie learning from trial-and-error feedback about the value of actions and stimuli.

He is also interested in understanding how different behavioral control mechanisms such as the Pavlovian, habitual, and goal-directed systems, contribute to behavior. In addition, he has examined how the brain learns and makes decisions in social contexts, characterizing the computational mechanisms that support social learning and inference. More recently, his work has explored how these systems interact at both neural and behavioral levels, and how individual differences in these systems contribute to psychiatric disorders.

O'Doherty completed an undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Psychology at Trinity College Dublin in 1996. He earned a D.Phil in Experimental Psychology from the University of Oxford in 2001and subsequently served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Welcome Department of Imaging Neuroscience at University College London until 2004. He joined Caltech in 2004 and became a full Professor of Psychology in 2009. From 2008 to 2010, he also held a Professorship in Cognitive Neuroscience at Trinity College Dublin. He served as Director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center from 2014 to 2017 and became the Fletcher Jones Professor of Decision Neuroscience in October 2021.

Mid Career Award

As a way to better recognize our membership for their work, we have included the Mid-Career Award for 2026. The award recognizes a mid-stage investigator who has made significant contributions to Social and Affective Neuroscience in terms of outstanding scholarship and service to the field.

Shuo Wang

Department of Radiology, Washington University in St. Louis

2026 Mid-Career Award Winner

Dr. Shuo Wang is an Associate Professor of Radiology, Neurosurgery, and Biomedical Engineering at Washington University in St. Louis. He received his Ph.D. from Caltech in 2014 and completed postdoctoral training at Caltech and Princeton University in 2017. His research integrates multimodal, advanced measurement techniques with sophisticated computational approaches to elucidate the neural mechanisms and computations underlying face and object processing, visual attention, emotion, and memory. The overarching questions guiding his work focus on how the brain recognizes faces and objects, discerns environmental significance, and translates visual information into memory. He is particularly interested in the neural computations that support these cognitive processes. Using a multimodal approach, he investigates these questions at both the microscopic level—through state-of-the-art human single-neuron recordings—and the macroscopic level, employing fMRI, EEG, and intracranial EEG. These experimental methods are complemented by advanced computational techniques designed to handle complex, large-scale datasets. Dr. Wang and his team have developed novel tools for deep learning–based analysis of neural responses, computational saliency and memory modeling, neural decoding, and automated video analysis. His research also includes characterizing individual differences in cognitive processes, particularly to understand how these processes are disrupted. To this end, he studies brain lesion patients, including rare congenital cases with focal amygdala lesions, as well as individuals with autism, representing extremes in cognitive variation that likely exist along a continuum. His research has been recognized with an NSF CAREER Award, a DoD Young Investigator Award, the Dana Clinical Neuroscience Award, and a Powe Award.

Early Career Award

The Early Career Award recognizes an early-stage investigator who has made significant contributions to Social and Affective Neuroscience in terms of outstanding scholarship and service to the field.

Elisa Baek

Department of Psychology, University of Southern California

2026 Early Career Award Winner

Elisa Baek is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California, where she directs the Social Connection Lab. Elisa draws from methods and approaches from social psychology, neuroscience, network science, and communication to study what helps people feel socially connected to one another. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and completed her postdoctoral training at UCLA.

Travel Awards

We are happy to announce that The Social & Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS) was able to offer TEN (10) travel awards for this year's conference. To promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice (EDIJ), the SANS board and EDIJ committee, decided to capitalize on these funds to take a step toward increasing inclusivity at the conference. To that end, these funds were awarded to students and scholars from underrepresented groups in our society. Furthermore, the society will offer opportunities for grant awardees to meet and interact with PIs who share similar scientific interests. We are currently working on establishing a comprehensive and long-term EDIJ infrastructure that will strive to reflect and represent the various diverse dimensions of our society.

Partly sponsored by Caltech

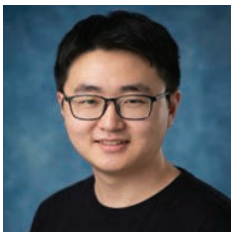
Avisha
University of Southern California

Gabriel Fajardo
Dartmouth College

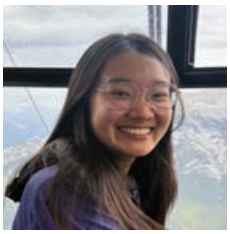
Eunjee Ko
The Ohio State University

Seh-Joo Kwon
Rutgers University-Newark

Jinwoo Lee
University of California



Lei Li
Stanford University



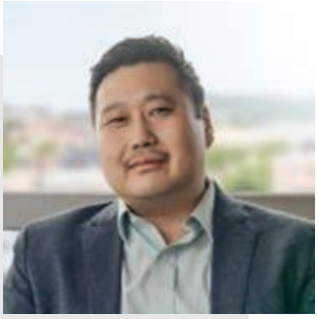
Jean Luo
University of Southern California

Casey Nicastri
Rutgers University-Newark

Miriam Schwyck
Columbia University

Ting-Ruei Wang
National Taiwan University

Presidential Speaker



Steve Chang

Yale University

Steve Chang is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Yale University, and a member of both the Wu Tsai Institute and the Kavli Institute for Neuroscience. He serves as co-Director of Yale's Interdepartmental Neuroscience PhD Program and co-Director of the undergraduate major in Neuroscience. His research program aims to elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying social behavior and to reveal insights into how these processes may go awry in disorders marked by social dysfunction. His laboratory employs high-density electrophysiological recordings across multiple brain regions during real-life social interactions to reveal the neural codes, computations, and network-level dynamics that support naturalistic social behavior and cognition.

Keynote Speaker

Elizabeth Phelps

Harvard University

Elizabeth Anya Phelps received her PhD from Princeton University and served on the faculty of Yale University and New York University. She is currently the Pershing Square Professor of Human Neuroscience at Harvard University. Her laboratory has earned widespread acclaim for its groundbreaking research on how the human brain processes emotion, particularly as it relates to learning and memory. Dr. Phelps is the recipient of career achievement awards from the Cognitive Neuroscience Society, the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, the Association for Psychological Science and the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation and received the Association for Psychological Science Mentor Award. She is a fellow of the Society for Experimental Psychology and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and was a founding board member of the International Neuroethics Society. She has served as the President of the Association for Psychological Science, the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society and the Society for Neuroeconomics.

SANS Leadership

Board Members

Dominic Fareri, Adelphi University
President

Jennifer Kubota, University of Delaware
Vice-President

Ajay Satpute, Northeastern University
Past President

Pin-Hao (Andy) Chen, National Taiwan University
Secretary-Treasurer

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Director-at-Large

Oriel FeldmanHall, Brown University
Director-at-Large

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Director-at-Large

Yuan Chang Leong, University of Chicago
Director-at-Large

Meghan L. Meyer, Columbia University
Director-at-Large

Candace Raio, New York University
Director-at-Large

Mark A. Thornton, Dartmouth College
Director-at-Large

Hongbo Yu, University of California Santa Barbara
Director-at-Large

Program Co-Chairs

Candace Raio, New York University

Justin Minue Kim, Sungkyunkwan University

Program and Review Committee

Candace M. Raio, New York University

Justin Minue Kim, Sungkyunkwan University

Peter Sokol-Hessner, University of Denver

Katie Insel, Northwestern University

Jaime Castrellon, University of California

Shuo Wang, Washington University in St. Louis

Nina Lauharatanahirun, Pennsylvania State University

Society Committees

Awards Committee

- **Ajay Satpute**, Northeastern University
- **Dominic Fareri**, Adelphi University
- **Jennifer Kubota**, University of Delaware

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee (EDIJ)

Chair: Damian Stanley, Adelphi University

- **Kahiau Among**, Nationwide Children's Hospital
- **Cat Camacho**, Washington University in St. Louis
- **Emilie Caspar**, Ghent University
- **Jasmin Cloutier**, University of Delaware
- **Jillian Franks**, Brandeis University
- **Melanie Kos,** Temple University
- **Nina Lauharatanahirun,** Penn State University
- **Richard Lopez,** Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- **Ava Ma de Sousa,** UC Santa Barbara
- **Joao Moreira,** University of Wisconsin–Madison
- **Hannaneh Yazdi,** Karolinska Institute

Partnerships Committee

Chair: Dominic Fareri, Adelphi University

- **Eshin Jolly**, University of California, San Diego
- **Haroon Popal**, Evon Medics, LLC
- **Ellen Christine Roche**, University of Maryland
- **Ajay Satpute**, Northeastern University
- **David Smith**, Temple University

Social Media Committee

Co-Chairs:

- **Mark Thornton**, Dartmouth University
- **Yuan Chang Leong**, University of Chicago

Trainee Committee

Chair: Hongbo Yu, University of California, Santa Barbara

- **Cat Camacho**, Washington University in St. Louis
- **Jordan Dejoie**, Adelphi University
- **Shanny Foo**, Montreal Neurological Institute
- **Kathryn McNaughton**, University of Maryland
- **Nikki A. Puccetti**, The Ohio State University
- **Shawn A. Rhoads**, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Venue Map

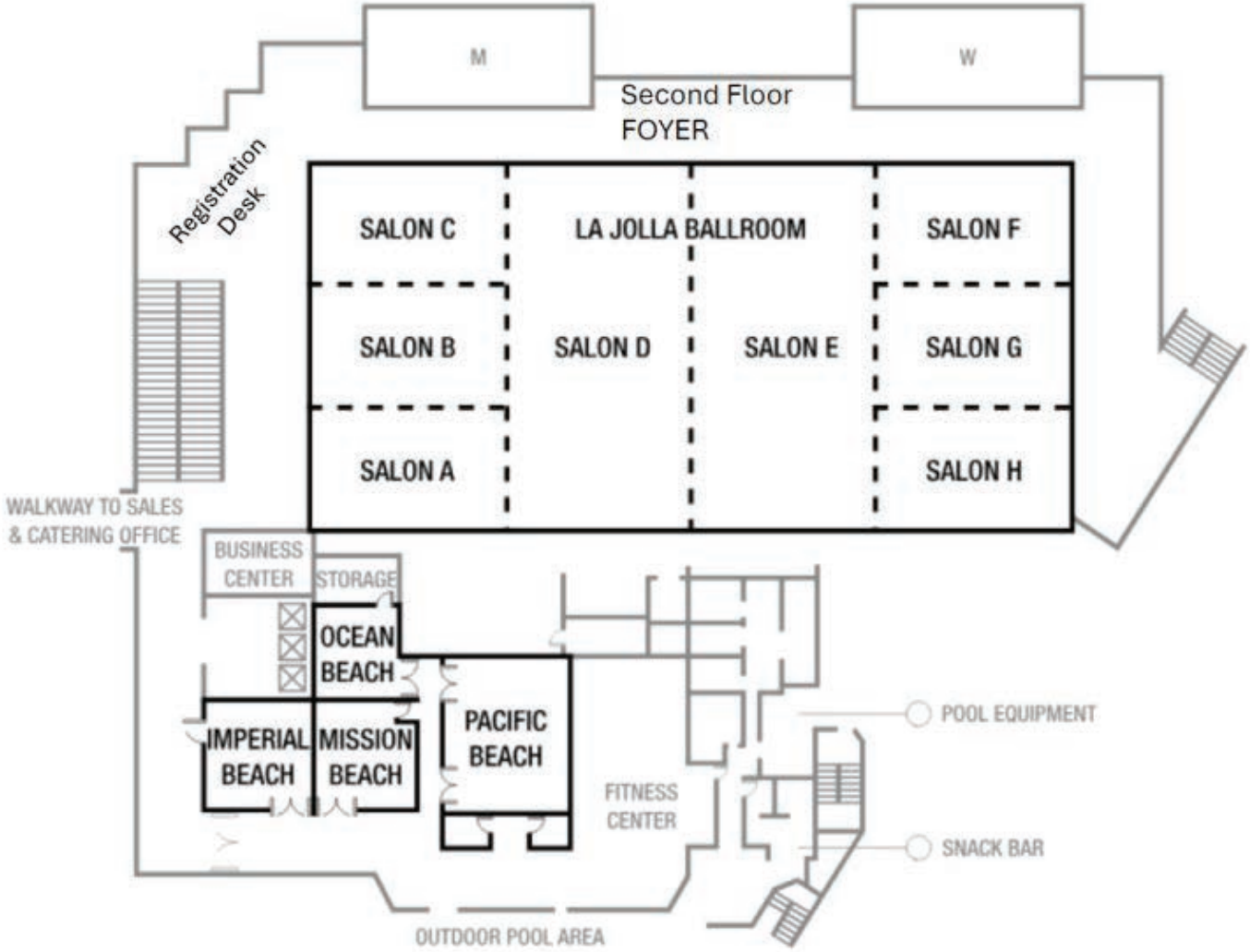
Pre-Conference Workshops

- SANS Investigators Summit – Salon F
- Navigating the fMRI Multiverse – Salon G
- Building a Thriving Research Career – Salon H

Main Session: Salon ABCDE

Poster Session: FGH

Exhibitors: Second Floor Foyer



General Conference Information

Venue Wi-Fi Access

Wi-Fi is available in the SANS meeting space for SANS delegates.

NETWORK(SSID): SANS_MTG

INTERNET ACCESS CODE: sans2026

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: 877-668-3572

Registration

Conference registration fees include access to the entire conference program including:

- Award sessions
- Keynote speaker sessions
- Symposia sessions
- Individual orals & poster sessions
- Professional development opportunities
- Welcome reception & social events
- Daily coffee breaks
- Complimentary Wi-Fi in conference areas
- Networking opportunities

Name Badges

Your name badge is your admission ticket to all conference sessions, coffee breaks, and the opening reception. **Please wear it at all times**. At the end of the conference, we ask that you recycle your name badge in one of the name badge recycling stations near the registration desk.

Lost Name Badges

There is a $25 replacement fee for any lost or missing name badges – If you've lost your name badge, visit the registration desk for a replacement as soon as possible.

Registration and Information Desk Hours

The SANS registration and information desk, located in the **La Jolla Ballroom Foyer (Second floor)** will be open during the following dates and times:

Wednesday, April 15	12:00 – 17:00
Thursday, April 16	07:00 – 18:30
Friday, April 17	07:30 – 18:00
Saturday, April 18	08:00 – 18:00

If you need assistance during the conference, please visit the registration desk.

Poster Information

Poster Session 1: Thursday, April 16, 2026

Set Up Between:	09:00 – 14:00
Session Time:	15:00 – 17:00
Poster Removal:	18:00

Poster Session 2: Friday, April 17, 2026

Set Up Between:	08:30 – 14:30
Session Time:	16:15 – 17:45
Poster Removal:	18:00

Poster Session 3: Saturday, April 18, 2026

Set Up Between:	8:00 – 13:00
Session Time:	14:00 – 16:00
Poster Removal:	18:00

Any posters that are not taken down by the removal deadline will be held at the registration desk until the end of the conference. Any posters that remain unclaimed by the end of the conference will be disposed of.

Information on Poster Authors (Primary), Poster Numbers and Poster Titles begins on page 29.

General Conference Information

Staff

SANS staff from Podium Conference Specialists can be identified by bright orange STAFF ribbons on their name badges. Feel free to ask anyone of our staff for assistance. For immediate assistance please visit us at the registration desk.

Meals

Daily coffee breaks and an opening reception are included in your conference registration fees. Any additional food and beverages will be at your own expense.

Dietary Requirements

Food and beverages offered during breaks and the opening reception will be clearly labeled. We have thoughtfully curated a diverse selection to accommodate various preferences and needs.

Special Conference Events

You can find all the details here:
socialaffectiveneuro.org/conference-events

Mentor-Mentee Kick-Off
Thursday, April 16 08:00 – 09:00

NIH Roundtable
Thursday, April 16 12:30 – 13:30

Comic SANS
Thursday, April 16 17:00 – 18:00

EDIJ Meet-Up & Happy Hour
Friday, April 17 17:45 – 18:45

SANS Social
Friday, April 17 18:45 onwards

Lunch Options

Din Tai Fung 8 min walk
Popular restaurant known for soup dumplings, noodles, and other Taiwanese and Chinese dishes.

Javier's 8 min walk
Stylish restaurant serving elevated Mexican cuisine, including chef-crafted dishes, margaritas, tequila, beer, and wine.

True Food Kitchen 8 min walk
Health-focused restaurant offering seasonal salads, bowls, pizzas, burgers, and options for vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free diets.

Ramen Nagi 8 min walk
Japanese restaurant serving Tokyo-style ramen with customizable noodles, signature broths, and classic appetizers.

P.F. Chang's China Bistro 10 min walk
Casual restaurant known for Chinese-American favorites such as lettuce wraps, Mongolian beef, and spring rolls.

RED O "Taste of Mexico" 10 min walk
Sleek restaurant with patio seating serving elevated Mexican cuisine and cocktails.

Seasons 52 16 min walk
Fresh grill and wine bar featuring a seasonal menu in a casual yet sophisticated setting.

Pacific Catch West Coast Fish House 16 min walk
Seafood restaurant offering fish dishes, bowls, tacos, and other coastal-inspired fare.

The Amalfi Llama 18 min walk
Restaurant blending live-fire cooking with fresh Italian flavors, centered around an open parrilla and wood-fired oven.

Board & Brew UTC 20 min walk
Casual sandwich shop serving sandwiches, wraps, salads, and local craft beer.

Blue Ocean Sushi & Grill 20 min walk
Modern casual restaurant serving sushi, sashimi, Asian-fusion dishes, salads, and grilled entrées.

Pazza Market & Cucina 20 min walk
Italian restaurant featuring freshly made pastas, wood-fired pizzas, and seasonal dishes.

Lemonade 24 min walk
Fast-casual California eatery offering comfort food, seasonal dishes, and cafeteria-style service.

Sponsors

Silver Sponsors

Measure physiology anywhere, anytime, in any location with BIOPAC's data acquisition and analysis hardware and software solutions. BIOPAC instrumentation is used in 99% of the world's universities and is used all over the world for meaningful scientific discovery. A full line of wired and wireless solutions can be tailored to affective research in the real-world, in virtual reality, or in the MRI environment. Integrate BIOPAC with tools for stimulus presentation, eye tracking, fNIRS, and more. BIOPAC offers a complete solution with a powerful application, AcqKnowledge Software, allowing researchers to manage and analyze all data in one application.

Website: **biopac.com**

Caltech is a world-renowned science and engineering institute that marshals some of the world's brightest minds and most innovative tools to address fundamental scientific questions and pressing societal challenges. The Institute manages JPL for NASA, sending probes to explore the planets of our solar system and quantify changes on our home planet. Caltech also owns and operates large-scale research facilities such as the Seismological Laboratory and a global network of astronomical observatories, including the Palomar and W. M. Keck Observatories; and cofounded and comanages LIGO.

Caltech is an independent, privately supported institution with a 124-acre campus located in Pasadena, California.

Provided support toward Trainee Travel Awards

Website: **caltech.edu**

NIRx is a leading provider of comprehensive solutions for functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) research. Our non-invasive and user-friendly fNIRS technology enables the measurement of neural activity in the cortex and large-scale cortical networks, providing insights into the neural mechanisms underlying perception and cognition. Our complete range of research solutions includes a versatile multimodal hardware platform, advanced online and offline analysis software, expert technical and scientific support, and comprehensive training programs.

Provided support toward Mentor & Mentee Match Event

Website: **nirx.net**

Bronze Sponsors

Provided support toward NIH Roundtable session

Website: **Lakeside Entertainment Group**

Temple University
College of Liberal Arts

The Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at Temple University advances psychological science through a threefold mission: conducting cutting-edge research, training undergraduate and doctoral students, and providing psychological services grounded in best practices. Its nationally ranked PhD program offers research-focused training in Clinical Psychology, Cognition and Neuroscience, Developmental Psychology, and Social Psychology. Faculty and students pursue discovery in world-class laboratories, with many programs supported by NIH, NSF, and private foundations. The department integrates scientific rigor, translational impact, and inclusive excellence across its research, training, and community engagement efforts.

Provided support toward NIH Roundtable session

Website: **Temple University**

Other sponsors for the NIH Roundtable session

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
Gordon F. Derner School of Psychology

Website: **Adelphi.edu**

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Website: **psyc.umd.edu**

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Website: **psychology.columbia.edu**

SANS Pre-Conference Workshops

Wednesday April 15 14:00- 18:00

PI Summit

SANS INVESTIGATORS SUMMIT ON FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Social and affective neuroscience is at a crossroads. We are facing funding cuts for core questions in our field. At the same time, advances in rigor for cutting edge research require strong funding support. The Funding and Resources Summit is designed to bring SANS investigators together to collectively confront these challenges. Key questions motivating the Summit include:

- What questions and themes should guide the field over the next 5 years?
- How do we build new datasets and collaborations when funding is limited?
- How can we pursue research lines that are being censored?
- How do we prepare for the real costs and infrastructure challenges of running a lab?
- How can we unlock more value from the data and resources we already have?
- How can we better support and invest in early-career PIs and trainees?

The summit will involve brief talks with extra time reserved for group discussions.

Speakers:
Kevin LaBar, *Duke University*
Ralph Adolphs, *Caltech*
Russ Poldrack, *Stanford University*
Lucina Uddin, *University of California, Los Angeles*
Jenni Beer, *University of Texas at Austin*
Kalina Michalska, *University of California, Riverside*

Wednesday April 15 – 13:00- 17:00

"NAVIGATING THE FMRI MULTIVERSE"

Practical tools for robust fMRI preprocessing: A workshop on best practices in fMRI preprocessing with fMRIPrep and related tools. Explore how analytic variability affects reproducibility through multiverse analyses, guided by MRI experts.

Thomas Liu
Essential Concepts for Navigating the fMRI Processing Multiverse

Over the last 30 years the fMRI processing landscape has expanded into a vast multiverse of methodological choices making it increasingly difficult for researchers to navigate the array of available options. In this talk I will review some key concepts that can help to guide the decision-making process for both task-based and resting-state fMRI studies. I will discuss how seemingly innocuous processing choices can have a profound effect on data analysis and interpretation thus emphasizing the need to develop a working knowledge of fundamental principles and unresolved controversies.

Alan Simmons

Considerations for Task-based Neuroimaging

Designing a task-based fMRI study involves a series of judgment calls from conceptualization building programing regressing and operationalization the task. We will walk through some lessons learning and specific considerations. We will invite open discussion of design considerations from the group.

Gaurav Patel

Preprocessing of fMRI data and Cortical Mapping

Preprocessing and analysis methods aimed at improving the reliability of fMRI data analyses continue to advance at a rapid pace requiring ever more resources. Here I will discuss the BIDS format BIDS-based processing pipelines (such as fMRIPrep) deployment of BIDS-based processing pipelines on a computing cluster and techniques for individualized cortical surface mapping.

Jack Grinband

Temporal Integration and Reaction Time: Implications for fMRI Inference

The BOLD signal temporally integrates neural activity, rendering fMRI estimates inherently sensitive to variability in reaction time (RT). In task-based studies, this induces a fundamental identifiability problem in which non-specific, time-on-task–related variance can be misattributed to the latent cognitive processes an experiment seeks to isolate. This talk will demonstrate how incorporating RT into standard GLM frameworks alters parameter estimates and, in some cases, qualitatively changes the interpretation of task-evoked activity.

13:00 – 17:00

BUILDING A THRIVING RESEARCH CAREER

An interactive session all about the practical side of being a scientist **designed for trainees** from pre-grad school all the way up to postdocs. The session will cover grant information and **advice for early career scientists straight from NIH staff**, professional skills and strategies for long-term success in academic careers (i.e. time management, mentorship, writing, project management, etc.), a discussion panel all about the real paths navigated by successful senior SANS scientists, practical next steps to help trainees level up and transition to graduate school, postdocs, faculty jobs, or industry, and networking opportunities.

The workshop will be led by the **2027 SANS Program Committee Co-Chairs** and will feature the amazing opportunity to hear from **NIH staff members**:

- Dr. Peter Sokol-Hessner, PhD: *Associate Professor & Director of the Sokol-Hessner Lab, University of Denver*
- Dr. Nina Lauharatanahirun, PhD: *William and Wendy Korb Early Career Professor in Biomedical Engineering & Assistant Professor of Biobehavioral Health Director of the Decision Neuroscience Lab, Penn State University*

NIH Participation

As part of a pre-conference meeting for early-career investigators staff from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will highlight recent announcements relevant to career development and new research programs and will be available to answer questions from attendees.

Panelists:

Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, NIH

Layla Esposito, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH

Emily Hooker, National Institute on Aging, NIH

Marguerite Matthews, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH

Liz Necka, National Institute of Mental Health, NIH

Matt Sutterer, National Institute on Aging, NIH National Institute on Aging, NIH

SANS Conference Program Schedule

Click here to see the program on our website.

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

12:00 – 17:30
La Jolla Foyer

Conference Registration Desk Open

Pick up your name badges now!

13:00 – 17:00
La Jolla Salon G

Pre-Conference Workshop - Early Career
BUILDING A THRIVING RESEARCH CAREER

Moderators

Peter Sokol-Hessner, *University of Denver*
Nina Lauharatanahirun, *Penn State University*

NIH Panelists

Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz, *Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, NIH*
Layla Esposito, *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH*
Emily Hooker, *National Institute on Aging, NIH*
Marguerite Matthews, *National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH*
Liz Necka, *National Institute of Mental Health, NIH*
Matt Sutterer, *National Institute on Aging, NIH National Institute on Aging, NIH*

13:00 – 17:00
La Jolla Salon H

Pre–Conference Workshop – Early Career
NAVIGATING THE FMRI MULTIVERSE

Moderator

Justin Minue Kim, *Sungkyunkwan University*

Speakers

Thomas Liu, *UCSD*
Alan Simmons, *UCSD*
Guarav Patel, *Columbia University*
Jack Grinband, *Columbia University*

14:00 – 18:00
La Jolla Salon F

Pre–Conference PI Summit
SANS INVESTIGATORS SUMMIT ON FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Moderators

Ajay Satpute, *Northeastern University*
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Speakers

Scientific Direction: Dr. Ralph Adolphs
Sustainability and Professional Development: Dr. Kalina Michalska and Dr. Kevin LaBar
Building Community Wide Resources: Dr. Jennifer Beer, Dr. Lucina Uddin, Dr. Russ Poldrack

Thursday, April 16, 2026

07:00 – 18:00
La Jolla Foyer

Registration Open

08:00 – 09:00
La Jolla Ballroom ABCDE

Mentor Match Event

Sponsored by: NIRx ENLIGHTENING INNOVATION

Moderator
Hongbo Yu, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

An hour-long small-group meeting between groups of mentees and a mentor. Our goal for the kick-off event is to provide a mechanism for the SANS community to build new bridges with each other, and more specifically, between the faculty and the trainee communities.

09:00 – 09:30

Opening Remarks & Welcome Address

Speakers
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Join us for our opening remarks as we officially kick off the conference and highlight sessions not to be missed!

09:30 – 10:45

Symposium 1: New Directions in Social Learning & Memory

Moderator
Katie Insel, *Northwestern University*

Speakers
Meghan Meyer, *Columbia University*
Anna Vannucci, *Columbia University*
Yi Yang Teoh, *Brown University*
Clara Sava-Segal, *Dartmouth College*

10:45 – 11:15

Early Career Awardee Talk

Moderator
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Speaker & Recipient
Elisa Baek, *University of Southern California*

11:15 – 12:30

Symposium 2: Clinical and Translational Perspectives on Affect

Moderator
Justin Minue Kim, *Sungkyunkwan University*

Speakers
Diego Pizzagalli, *University of California, Irvine*
Brian Sweis, *Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York City*
Hedy Kober, *University of California, Berkeley*
Kevin LaBar, *Duke University*

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch Break (On own)

12:30 – 13:30
La Jolla Salon
ABCDE

NIH Roundtable

Moderator
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Hybrid Panel
Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz, *Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, NIH*
Neel Dhruv, *National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH*
Layla Esposito, *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH*
Emily Hooker, *National Institute on Aging, NIH*
Liz Necka, *National Institute of Mental Health, NIH*
Matt Sutterer, *National Institute on Aging, NIH*

In this roundtable discussion and open Q&A with staff from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will highlight research programs, funding opportunities, resources, and updates relevant to social and affective neuroscience. Updates and opportunities from the National Institute on Aging (NIA), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) will be discussed, in addition to NIH-wide training opportunities, funding procedures and processes, toolkits and data repositories, and other resources.

Sponsored by: Temple University College of Liberal Arts; Adelphi University Gordon F. Derner School of Psychology; University of Maryland Columbia University in the City of New York Department of Psychology

13:30 – 14:00

SANS Fellow Introduction and Blitz Talk

Moderator
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Speakers
Chelsea Helion, *Temple University*
Kristen Lindquist, *Ohio State University*
Abigail Marsh, *Georgetown University*
David Smith, *Temple University*
Shuo Wang, *Washington University in St. Louis*
René Weber, *University of Technology in Berlin*

14:00 – 15:00

Presidential Speaker
BEHAVIORAL AND NEURAL MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL DECISION-MAKING

Moderator:
Dominic Farer*i, Adelphi University*

Speaker
Steve Chang, *Yale University*

The defining feature of the primate brain is its social acumen. Humans and other advanced social species continuously navigate diverse social contexts and make decisions shaped by prosocial, antisocial, or other strategic preferences. This talk will present an overview of ongoing research efforts aimed at understanding the neural mechanisms of social decision-making and social interaction. Focusing on the prefrontal–amygdala circuits, we will first examine the neural codes representing decision variables for self and other, as well as the inter-areal coordination that supports social preference. In the context of naturalistic and

unstructured social interactions, we will examine how prefrontal–amygdala circuits encode multiple interactive social gaze variables that guide dynamic social attention, and how the prefrontal cortex integrates social evidence gathered from strategic gaze to support cooperative decision-making. Together, these studies help inform basic neural principles of social decision-making and interaction, providing insights into the evolutionary roots of human social cognition.

15:00 –15:30
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

Poster Spotlight 1

Moderator
Jaime Castrellon

Speakers
Talia Andris, *University of Miami*
Ruohan Feng, *Georgia Institute of Technology*
Yeaju Kim, *Princeton University*
Jean Luo, *University of Southern California*
Rachel Marcus, *Brandeis University*
Camille Phaneuf-Hadd, *Harvard University*
Inbal Ravreby, *Cornell University*
Spencer Waters, *National Institute of Mental Health*
Dan Zhu, *Ohio State University*

15:30 – 17:00
La Jolla Salon FGH

Poster Session 1 & Opening Reception

17:00 – 18:00
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

"Comic Sans"

Hosted by
Vishnu 'Deepu' Murty, *University of Oregon*

Some scholars say that comedy is a simple equation of tragedy plus time. We disagree and think comedy is purely driven by Social and Affective Neuroscientists. Join us again for the 3rd edition of Comic SANS, a comedy showcase of social/affective neuroscientists and the research topics they love. Come see some of your favorite scientists perform stand-up, play games, and more.

Friday, April 17, 2026

07:00 – 18:00
La Jolla Foyer

Registration Open

8:15-9:15
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

BIOPAC Presentation

Moderator
Shuo Wang, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Advancing Brain-Body Research: Introducing the BIOPAC MedelOpt+ Integrated Neurophysiology Platform

Physiology and neuroimaging studies often require the simultaneous acquisition of multiple data streams, but it can be challenging to sync data from different systems. A new Brain-Body Platform, MedelOpt+ with MP200 and AcqKnowledge, synchronizes high-density fNIRS, EEG, and physiological data in a single unified environment.

We'll review common challenges in multimodal research—from complex data synchronization to workflow inefficiencies—and present technical capabilities of the new Brain-Body Platform with applications in neuroscience, cardiovascular physiology, cognitive sciences, VR, and more.

9:15- 10:30

Symposium 3
AFFECT & DECISION-MAKING

Moderator
Candace M. Raio, *New York University*

Speakers
Oriel FeldmanHall, *Brown University*
Dean Mobbs, *Caltech*
Robb Rutledge, *Yale University*
Kate Wassum, *UCLA*

10:30 – 11:45

EDIJ Session
HONORING ACHIEVEMENTS, REFLECTING TOGETHER, AND ENVISIONING OUR SHARED FUTURE

Moderator
Damien Stanley, *Adelphi University*

During this symposium we will first celebrate this year's diversity travel award recipients and their research accomplishments with a series of brief (1-2 minute) flash talks. We will then briefly discuss the preliminary findings of the 2025/2026 impacts survey and present a synopsis of the PI-Summit preconference. We will close the session with facilitated small-group discussions that extend the themes discussed during the PI-Summit preconference to incorporate the perspectives of trainees and the broader SANS membership, charting a path forward for the SANS community in these uncertain times.

11:45 – 12:45
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

Trainee Blitz Talks

Moderator
Nina Lauharatanahirun, *Penn State University*

Speakers
Skylar Brooks, *University of California*
Amber X. Chen, *University of California Santa Barbara*
Hayley Dorfman, *Harvard University*
Gabriel Fajardo, *Dartmouth College*
Jinwoo Lee, *Korea University*
Alicia Liu, *University of Chicago*
Nikki Puccetti, *Ohio State University*

12:45 – 14:15

Lunch Break (On own)

14:15 – 14:45

Mid-Career Awardee Talk

Moderator
Ajay Satpute, *Northeastern University*

Speaker & Recipient
Shuo Wang, *Washington University in St. Louis*

14:45 – 15:45

Keynote Speaker

THE HUMAN AMYGDALA, THREAT, AND ANXIETY: TRANSLATIONAL PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Moderator
Candace Raio, *New York University*

Speaker
Elizabeth Phelps, *Harvard University*

Animal models of associative threat learning provide a basis for understanding human fears and anxiety. This talk explores the successes and failures in translating the neural mechanisms of threat processing identified in animal models to complex human learning and the treatment of anxiety-related disorders. First, I will briefly review how extinction and emotion regulation, techniques adapted in cognitive behavioral therapy treatments can be used to control learned defensive responses via inhibitory signals from the ventromedial prefrontal cortex to the amygdala. One drawback of these techniques is threat responses are often weakly inhibited and can return, which has been proposed to underlie the significant relapse rate following cognitive behavioral therapies. I will then describe novel behavioral interventions that might result in a more lasting fear or threat reduction and will discuss efforts to incorporate these novel techniques to innovative treatments for anxiety-related disorders. Finally, I will reflect on how we might improve efforts to translate insights from the neurobiology of threat learning to the treatment of anxiety-related disorders.

15:45 – 16:15
La Jolla ABCDE

Poster Spotlight 2

Moderator

Jaime Castrellon, *University of California*

Speakers

Nir Jacoby, *Dartmouth College*

Scott Kooiman, *University of California San Diego*
Jiyoon Lee, *University of California*
Minwoo Lee, *Georgetown University*

Seohyeon Lee, *Sungkyunkwan University*
Theoni Varoudaki, *Pennsylvania State University*
Joseph Venticinque, *Georgetown University*
Huanqing Wang, *Ohio State University*

16:15 – 17:45
La Jolla Salon FGH

Poster Session 2

17:30 – 18:30

EDIJ Social Meet-Up

Optional

Eureka! restaurant
4353 La Jolla Village Dr, San Diego, CA 92122

18:45

SANS Social Meet-Up

Optional

Eureka! restaurant
4353 La Jolla Village Dr, San Diego, CA 92122

Saturday, April 18, 2026

07:00 – 18:00
La Jolla Foyer

Registration Open

8:30 – 9:45
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

Symposium 4
NATURALISTIC HYPERSCANNING: MECHANISMS, PLASTICITY, AND NETWORK COMPLEXITY

Moderator
Shuo Wang, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Speakers
Suzanne Dikker, *New York University*
Giacomo Novembre, *Italian Institute of Technology*
Simone Shamay-Tsoory, *University of Haifa*
Anat Dahan, *Braude College of Engineering*

10:15 – 11:30

Symposium 5
ADVANCING EMOTION REGULATION RESEARCH: NEURAL MECHANISMS AND TRANSLATIONAL APPLICATIONS

Moderator
Katie Insel, *Northwestern University*

Speakers
Richard Lopez, *Worcester Polytechnic Institute*
Bryan Denny, *Rice University*
Kateri McRae, *University of Denver*
Nicole Giuliani, *University of Oregon*

11:30 – 12:30
La Jolla Salon ABCE

Faculty Blitz Talks

Moderator:
Peter Sokol-Hessner, *University of Denver*

Speakers
Jon Freeman, *Columbia University*
Joao Guassi Moreira, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*
Regina Lapate, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
Elizabeth Losin, *Pennsylvania State University*
Vishnu Murty, *University of Oregon*
Monica Thieu, *University of San Diego*

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch Break (On own)

14:00 – 14:30

Poster Spotlight 3

Moderator
Jaime Castrellon, *University of California*

Speakers
Nathan Chabin, *University of California, Los Angeles*
Jennifer Crawford, *Brandeis University*
Eunjee Ko, *Ohio State University*

Kaitlyn Mundy, *Columbia University*
Casey Nicastri, *Rutgers University-Newark*
Miriam Schwyck, *Columbia University*

14:30 – 16:00
La Jolla Salon FGH

Poster Session

16:00 – 17:00
La Jolla Salon ABCDE

Distinguished Scholar Awardee Talk

Moderator
Dominic Fareri, *Adelphi University*

Speaker & Recipient
John P. O'Doherty, *Caltech*

17:00 – 17:30

Closing Remarks & Announcements

17:30

SANS Annual Business Meeting

(open to all attendees- only members of SANS can vote)

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Exhibitors

Thank you to this year's Exhibitors

SANS Conference Poster Index

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15:30 – 17:00
Poster Session 2 Friday, April 17
16:15 – 17:45
Poster Session 3 Saturday, April 18
14:30-16:00

Poster presenters will be at their poster booth during their assigned poster session, but the posters are available to review throughout the specified day.

For a complete list of poster abstracts, please review the Abstract Book.

Poster board numbers are indicated as follows:
Poster Session – Theme – Board Number

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A. Basic Affect & Emotion Regulation
B. Stress & Threat
C. Social Cognition & Intergroup Processes
D. Prosocial Behavior & Self
E. Communication/Language & Emotion Perception
F. Decision-Making, Reward & Motivation
G. Development
H. Clinical Disorders

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