

Rachel R. Sharp

Neuroscientist & Science Writer

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Professional Summary

Narrative-driven science writer and Neuroscience PhD Candidate passionate about strengthening bridges between research and our communities. As both a multi-disciplined scientist and community activist, I believe that scientists and community members are equal partners in driving societal change, and I aim to facilitate conversations that further these relationships. With proven expertise in translating complex research in neuroscience and genomics into clear, memorable, and actionable insights for broad audiences, I specialize in combining deep, hands-on research experience with direct outreach through powerful storytelling and editorial leadership.

Selected writing portfolio

- "When Practice Makes Perfect: The Neurons Behind Skilled Movement" | [The Pipettepen](#) 2024
A narrative feature that demystifies the neuroscience of motor learning through the lens of a single scientist and her discoveries
- "The Need for Diversity in Large-Scale Genetic Studies" | [The Pipettepen](#) 2023
Persuasive, data-driven examination of demographic representation gaps in genomic research
- "Neuroscience-Backed Strategies to Help You Learn More Effectively" | [BrainPost](#) 2024
Synthesis of recent neuroscience research into accessible and practical learning strategies

Journalism and Editorial Experience

- Contributing Author** | [BrainPost](#) 2023—Present
- Distill dense, peer-reviewed research into engaging and accessible articles for a lay audience, focusing on practical takeaways and clear explanations of complex topics
- Writer & Editor** | [The Pipettepen](#) 2022—Present
- Author original, long-form articles that explore nuanced scientific topics through a narrative lens
 - Uphold rigorous editorial standards by editing peer submissions to enhance clarity, narrative flow, and scientific accuracy for a graduate-level readership
- Blog Scheduler, Translation Lead, and Editor** | [NC DNA Day Blog](#) 2022—2023
- Pioneered and managed the blog's Spanish translation program, increasing translated content from 3 articles over two years to 17 in a single semester
 - Directed the editorial calendar and coordinated a team of writers, editors, and translators to ensure a consistent and high-quality publication schedule

Research and Scientific Experience

- Graduate Research Assistant** | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill April 2022 – present
Principal Investigator: Dr. Michael Love
- Project: The Effects of Social Risk on Genetic Liability for Bipolar Disorder*
- Integrate genomic data, social risk surveys, and electronic health record codes, to investigate the relationship between genetic risk, social risk, and clinical development of bipolar disorder
 - Communicate with neuroscientists, epidemiologists, and geneticists, to combine information from multiple scientific fields into one cohesive, interdisciplinary, research project
- Project: Pipeline for Analysis of MPRA Data Across Institutions*
- Developed pipelines to systematically analyze MPRA data across five international centers
 - Organized and led cross-center meetings to develop pipelines and streamline communication

Bioinformatic Analyst | OU Health Science Center Core Facilities

Jan 2020 — Aug 2021

Principal Investigator: Dr. Kenneth Jones

- Independently produced custom scripts in R, Python, Bash, and other languages to process and analyze data from single cell and bulk sequencing projects
- Collaborated with over 20 Principal Investigators on diverse research projects, including glioblastoma metastasis, zebrafish developmental models, and the genetics of Type 2 Diabetes

Science Outreach and Leadership

President | UNC Neuroscience Student Council

2022—2025

- Acted as the primary liaison between 100+ graduate students and program administration
- Promote community through the addition of new neuroscience community programs, direct check-in protocols for first-year students, and facilitation of the annual retreat
- Synthesize student needs and program goals by writing the Neuroscience program qualifying exam, rewriting the Neuroscience program Annual Progress Review Reports, and facilitating feedback interactions between trainees and administration year-round

Monthly Research Group Leader | Human Functional Regulatory Genomics

2023—2024

- Plan, organize, recruit speakers for, and facilitate monthly trainee-focused meetings with presentations and discussions on topics in the field of functional genomics

Mentor and Science Communicator | Multiple Programs

2021—Present

- Develop and lead interactive workshops on science and communication for middle and high school students through programs like Culbreth Middle School STEAM Day and WinSPIRE UNC
- Demystify STEM careers for young learners through mentorship with Letters to a Pre-Scientist

Writing Assistant | OU Honors College

2018—2019

- Taught advanced written language skills to 25 students in various Honors College writing courses which aim to develop critical thinking and a broad worldview
- Assisted students in developing tools for persuasion, clarity, and emotion in writing

Education

PhD in Neuroscience | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Exp. Spring 2026

Certificate in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology • NSF Graduate Research Fellow

BS in Psychology | University of Oklahoma

Dec 2019

Summa Cum Laude (4.0 GPA) • Minor: Criminology • National Merit Scholar

Professional Development & Memberships

ComSciCon Triangle Workshop Attendee

2025

Science Communicators of North Carolina Society Member

2024—2025

Selected Honors and Awards

Genomics of Brain Disorders Conference Bursary Travel Award

2023

Best Poster Award | *IGVF Consortium*

2022

UNC Department of Neuroscience T32

2022

Big Woman on Campus Award | Campus-wide leadership and service

2019

Dean's Award for Outstanding Honors College Leadership

2019

Selected Publications and Presentations

- 8 co-authored publications in high-impact journals including *Nature Genetics*
- 2 oral presentations and 6 poster presentations across local and international conferences
- ASHG abstract reviewer and session moderator