



# COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

## 2024

# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY



**Stephen Adamo**  
Assistant Professor  
Psychology

As an Arizona native, I attended the University of Arizona and received my B.S. in Psychology. After my research experience in visual perception and bee labs at the University of Arizona, I pursued my Ph.D. at Duke University, where I studied how people search (e.g., radiologists looking for signs of breast cancer). I am now an Assistant Professor of Psychology with a joint appointment in Medical Imaging.

Fun Fact: I was a performer at Walt Disney World and Universal Studios Florida.



**Julie Baum**

Lecturer  
Mathematics



I am originally from Italy, from a small town near Rome. Before coming to Tucson, I did my PhD in Vienna and my postdoc in Princeton. I mostly work in probability and mathematical physics, with a focus on random matrices and random operators. On a personal note, one can say that I am a collectionist of collections and that I like all nerdy things.

**Giorgio Cipolloni**  
Assistant Professor  
Mathematics





**Megan Corty**  
Assistant Professor  
Neuroscience

I am a molecular and cellular neuroscientist. I use fruit flies to study neuron-glia interactions during development, aging, and after injury so I spend a lot of time using microscopes! I am originally from Southern California, but I have lived many places over the course of my academic journey including New York City and Massachusetts. I was based in Portland, OR just before moving to Tucson—so quite the change of climate for me. I am looking forward to exploring my new city even more once the weather gets a little cooler.

Fun fact: I like to travel and to read and watch “cozy mysteries” (think: *Miss Marple*, *Murder, She Wrote*, *Agatha Raisin*, etc.) to de-stress.



I am a Computer Systems Engineer, with MSc and PhD in Computer Science. I grew up in Colombia where I obtained my Bachelor's degree. I like to try new things, so I look forward to tasting all the different dishes and doing all the outdoor activities that Tucson has to offer.

**Diana Diazh**

Associate Professor of Practice  
Computer Science



**Carl Fields**  
Assistant Professor  
Astronomy

I am a computational astrophysicist broadly interested in massive stars, their explosions, and the multi-messenger signals they produce. I earned my B.S. in Physics and Earth & Space Exploration (Astrophysics) from Arizona State University (2016) and my Ph.D. in Astronomy & Astrophysics from Michigan State University (2021). My research interests span stellar hydrodynamics, core-collapse supernova explosions, multi-messenger emission signals, and nuclear astrophysics of massive star stellar models.

Fun fact: In 2020, I was named to the Forbes 30 under 30 for Science list and when I started this fall, I became the first previous ASU undergrad to join the department of Astronomy/Steward Observatory as faculty. I also (still) enjoy playing Pokémon Go in my free time.





**Sarah Grace**

Assistant Professor of Practice  
Psychology

I grew up in the bay area in California. I was an English major as an undergrad and taught high school English for 6 years before earning my graduate degrees in Psychology. I have 3 kids, two dogs, 9 chickens, and 1 fun desert tortoise. Oh, and a dwarf hamster named Cookie. I love teaching and my research focuses on emotional labor experienced by higher education faculty.





**Rachel Hyneman**  
Assistant Professor  
Physics

I am a particle physicist originally from the Phoenix area. During my PhD at the University of Michigan, I spent two years living in Geneva, Switzerland, to work with the ATLAS Experiment at CERN's Large Hadron Collider. My research today still revolves around the ATLAS Experiment, where I study the Higgs Boson to hunt for answers to outstanding questions about our universe. Prior to arriving in Tucson, I was working at SLAC while living in San Francisco. Outside of work, I enjoy skiing, hiking, trying new restaurants, and cooking.

Fun Fact: I play the double bass, which is taller than I am.



**Heonmi Kim**

Lecturer  
Mathematics



## **Megan Kobel**

Assistant Professor  
Speech, Language, and  
Hearing Sciences

I study the vestibular system, the portion of the inner ear which senses motion, and motion perception. My lab is installing a large motion platform to study how we sense very small motions. Outside of science, I enjoy walking with my dog, listening to podcasts, and spending hours trying to decide which restaurants to try in Tucson.





**Sam Krishnamurthy**  
Assistant Professor of  
Practice  
Physics

Sam joined the Physics Department in 2022 and has made substantial contributions to the department's teaching mission. She has taught a variety of courses in the past two years, ranging from large enrollment algebra-based introductory physics to calculus-based introductory mechanics, electricity, and magnetism for engineering major students to honor courses for physics and astronomy major students. She has been instrumental in developing and implementing evidence-based instructional strategies in classrooms and is actively involved in various education-related activities.





I am a quantitative ecologist with the interest to understand how global environmental changes have and will affect ecosystems, including biodiversity, phenology, and species interactions. While not working, I enjoy spending time with family, playing tennis, photographing, and watching sports.

**Daijiang Li**

Assistant Professor  
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology



**Annalyssa Lovos**

Assistant Professor of Practice  
Psychology

I am a cognitive psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist interested in how memory, creativity and problem-solving develop across the lifespan. After earning my BA I taught middle school and had my daughter, both of which made me insatiably interested in studying how people learn about and “know” the world. I first came to the UofA for my Ph.D., and I knew immediately that I wanted to stay.

During my summers, I like to head up to Montana with my family for some kayaking, fishing, and relaxing under the big trees. I also enjoy biographies of scientists and musicians.



**Jianwei Lyu**

Assistant Research Professor  
Steward Observatory

Dr. Lyu's main research area is extragalactic astronomy with a focus on active galactic nuclei (AGN), AGN-galaxy evolution and dust properties. He has extensive knowledge on the IR properties of AGN and their host galaxies and enjoys the hunting and characterization of obscured AGN across the Universe. He also probes the AGN obscuration structures through spectral energy distribution analysis, near- to mid-IR reverberation mapping technique and spatially-resolved image and IFU observations.





I'm interested in the acquisition of novel protein function across evolution. It is possible to model protein sequences as a language, viewing amino acids as words and whole proteins as sentences. As in human language where words have meaning based on context, amino acids have function based on the context of their surrounding amino acids. These models are a powerful tool to interpret both mutation effects and protein functional divergence. I'm broadly focused on developing frameworks to interpret biological properties through the lens of protein language.

**Claire McWhite**

Assistant Professor  
Molecular and Cellular Biology





**Anna Medvedovsky**  
Assistant Professor  
Mathematics

I am a mathematician — pure math side, number theory, primes and how they factor(!). Six weeks new in town, from the Boston area by way of Bonn. Bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, biking up and down 3rd St.

- What I'm loving about Tucson: all the pools, all the butterflies, the night sky, how quickly wet laundry dries.
- Seeking recommendations for: delicious lunch places close to ENR2, storytelling podcasts in French and German, mechanic for a beat-up east-coast minivan.
- Things I love to do that I am terrible at: hiking (both very ambitious and very slow — rare combination), acroyoga (glorious but painful), crossword puzzles (improving).
- Guilty pleasure: tormenting my children by reading aloud to them old novels I enjoyed as a child in Soviet Moscow, where books were tricky to come by — and school was always uphill both ways.



## **Melanie Moore**

Assistant Clinical Professor  
Speech, Language, and  
Hearing Sciences

I have the privilege of teaching graduate audiology students how to work with hearing impaired patients at the UA Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic which is on the bottom floor of the SLHS building. Prior to this position, I was a clinical audiologist in the Phoenix Metro Area, having worked in both a private practice setting and an ENT setting, as well as serving as the Audiology Consultant for the Newborn Hearing Screening Program for Arizona. I am also a past president of the Arizona Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ArSHA).

Fun fact: My B.S. in Speech and Hearing Sciences (2000) and M.S. in Audiology (2002) are from the U of A, and I played marching horn in the Pride of Arizona Marching Band for four years as an undergraduate.





**Robert Pollack**

Professor  
Mathematics

I am a number theorist and my main area of research is embedded in the  $p$ -adic world of numbers. Here for each prime number  $p$ , one has a different ruler to measure the distance between numbers. The bizarre properties of these rulers make for unexpected and enchanting kinds of geometry. Every triangle is isosceles and every point inside a circle can be considered its center! These  $p$ -adic worlds are rich with structure and lead to fascinating mathematics. When I put down my  $p$ -adic rulers, I enjoy board games, hiking, biking, and spending time with my family.





**Thomas Purcell**  
Assistant Professor  
Chemistry and Biochemistry

I was born and grew up in New Jersey, in the suburbs of New York City. I got my B.S. degree in Chemistry from NYU and did my Ph.D. at Northwestern University. After my Ph.D., I joined the Fritz Haber Institute as an Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow, and later became a group leader there. I joined the University of Arizona in January and have been starting up my research group in AI for materials discovery.

Fun Fact: I am looking forward to taking advantage of all of the great climbing here in Tucson.





## **Kristin Reeb**

Assistant Clinical Professor  
Speech, Language, and  
Hearing Sciences

Kristin is a Speech-Language Pathologist and Assistant Clinical Professor. She has a special interest in speech sound disorders and developmental language disorders and delays in the pediatric population. She values the opportunity to support children and their families with improving and enhancing communication skills while also preparing and accompanying graduate students on their journeys to becoming Speech-Language Pathologists.

Fun Fact: I love attending concerts and other live performances. I try to attend at least one concert or live performance each month.



## **Mathieu Renzo**

Assistant Professor  
Assistant Astronomer  
Astronomy

Mathieu is a physicist with interest in astronomy because of the wide range of phenomena and processes occurring astrophysical context. He focuses mostly on stellar astrophysics, and in particular massive stars, binary evolution, and stellar explosions. His research interests include stellar kinematics (runaway, "walkaway", and hyper-velocity stars), core-collapse and (pulsational) pair-instability supernovae, X-ray binaries, time-domain and gravitational-wave astronomy.



**Kyle van Gorkom**

Assistant Research Professor  
Steward Observatory

Kyle joined Steward Observatory in early 2022 to work with Ewan Douglas on the use of wavefront control and high contrast techniques to directly image exoplanets with space-based observatories. During his PhD in Optical Sciences, his research with Jared Males focused on the characterization and modeling of deformable mirrors and focal-plane wavefront sensing for the MagAO-X instrument. He previously worked on the development of metrology techniques for future space missions as an optical engineer at NASA Goddard, and on interferometry and coronagraphy at the Space Telescope Science Institute.





Kevin is using ground-based adaptive optics systems (such as VLT/SPHERE and MagAO) to search for young and forming planetary systems, and to study these archetypes of mature planetary systems through high-contrast imaging and spectroscopy.

**Kevin Wagner**

Assistant Research Professor  
Steward Observatory



**Bryan Wong**

Assistant Professor of Practice  
Speech, Language, and  
Hearing Sciences

Bryan Wong, PhD., AuD, CCC-A, earned his graduate degrees at the University of Arizona in 2019 (AuD) and 2024 (PhD). His current research focuses on hearing health care disparities and inequities, in addition to innovative approaches to increase accessibility. His other research interests include neuroanatomy of the auditory system, auditory electrophysiology, central auditory processing, and student-centered teaching in pedagogy.



**Cathy Yslas**  
Lecturer  
Mathematics