

Curriculum Vitae

W. Barrett Welchons

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EDUCATION

B.A., Psychology May 2026
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (expected)
Minor: International Agriculture and Natural Resources
Concentration: Honors Psychology
Cumulative GPA: 3.94
Major GPA: 4.0

ACADEMIC HONORS, AWARDS, & SCHOLARSHIPS

Ozier Family Alum Chapter #3, University of Tennessee (\$2,000) 2022-2026
HOPE with Merit Supplement, University of Tennessee (\$6,700) 2022-2026
National Merit Scholarship, University of Tennessee (\$1,000) 2022-2026
UT Provost Scholarship, University of Tennessee (\$1,000) 2022-2026
Advanced Undergraduate Research Activity Grant, University of Tennessee (\$2,250) 2025
CIE Study Abroad Scholarship, University of Tennessee (\$750) 2024
H&S Experience Grant, University of Tennessee (\$500) 2024
Dean's List, University of Tennessee 2022-2025

PRESENTATIONS

Welchons, W, Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (April 2026). *A Picture is Worth a Thousand Stereotypes: Examining the spatial location of characters in popular children's picture books*. Poster to be presented at Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EURECA), University of Tennessee.

Welchons, W, Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (February 2026). *A Picture is Worth a Thousand Stereotypes: Examining the spatial location of characters in popular children's picture books*. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology, Chicago, IL.

Welchons, W, Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (February 2026). *A Picture is Worth a Thousand Stereotypes: Examining the spatial location of characters in popular children's picture books*. Poster presented at Social Area Research Group Brownbag, University of Tennessee.

Welchons, W, Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (December 2025). *The Left Side of History: Examining the Relationship Between Leftward Presentation of Characters and Stereotypes in Children's Media*. Talk presented to the Psychology Alumni Board, University of Tennessee.

Welchons, W., Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (April 2025). *Exploring the Connections Between Race & Space*. Talk presented at Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium (ASURoS), University of Tennessee.

Welchons, W., Ruskey, M., & Lamer, S. A. (March 2025). *Exploring the Connections Between Race & Space*. Talk presented at Social Area Research Group Brownbag, University of Tennessee.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Research Assistant Fall 2024 – Spring 2026
Social Perception & Cognition Lab (SPAC)

University of Tennessee, Department of Psychology

Lab Director: Dr. Sarah Lamer, PhD

Graduate Student Mentor: Megan Ruskey

- **Led data collection on two studies** of how vertical and horizontal spatial positioning influences face perception, culminating in two university presentations to ASUREs and the faculty-led Social Psychology Area Brownbag (Fall 2024-Spring 2025).
- **Prepared and secured selection for a competitive intramural research grant** (AURA; Summer 2025).
- **Synthesized and summarized empirical literature** in support of ongoing graduate-level research projects.
- **Mentored and trained undergraduate research assistants** on laboratory protocols, ethical standards, and best research practices.
- **Designed and delivered interactive research demonstrations** for 3rd–5th grade students across Knox County, introducing concepts in social perception and visual illusions.
- **Developed technical proficiency** in R, Java, Adobe Photoshop, and video-editing software for research and dissemination purposes.
- **Served as a primary point of contact for research participants**, fostering a professional, inclusive, and welcoming study environment.
- **Prepared materials for Institutional Review Board (IRB) submissions**, contributing to study approval and compliance.

Honors Thesis: *Examining the spatial location of characters in popular children’s picture books*

Summer 2025 – Spring 2026

Advisor: Dr. Sarah Lamer, PhD

Graduate Student Mentor: Megan Ruskey

- **Led two large-scale content analyses** examining the spatial positioning of **1,471 characters across 100 children’s picture books**.
- **Developed a comprehensive coding manual and trained a team of undergraduate research assistants**, ensuring high procedural fidelity and reliable data collection.
- **Designed an experimental study informed by content-analysis findings** to test how exposure to biased visual imagery in picture books influences children’s social cognition.
- **Coordinated participant compensation and study logistics**, supporting smooth execution of the experimental protocol.
- **Research accepted for presentation at local and national conferences**, including the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Convention (Chicago), the UT Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium, and the UT Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement.

Youth Mentor

Fall 2025, Spring 2026

RECESS Vols

Supervisor: Dr. Chris Elledge

- **Applied evidence-based mentorship and youth intervention strategies** in a school-based counseling program.
- **Volunteered twice weekly as a mentor** for 3rd–4th grade students experiencing chronic bullying, social interaction difficulties, or aggressive behavior, using structured play during recess periods.

- **Prepared weekly progress reports** and communicated directly with RECESS Vols leadership regarding student development and challenges.
- **Collaborated with teachers and school administrators** to de-escalate and manage high-intensity interpersonal situations.

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

Camp Leader Summer 2025

Imagining Possibilities in Post-Secondary Education

Supervisor: Dr. Erin Hardin, PhD

- **Supervised a cohort of 10 campers** and jointly managed programming and safety for **40+ campers** alongside other camp leaders.
- **Delivered instructional sessions and facilitated structured group activities** focused on post-secondary preparation.
- **Coordinated daily activities and logistics** in collaboration with camp staff and leadership.

General Psychology/PSYC 110 Tutor

Team SONA

Supervisor: Dr. Jeff Larsen, PhD

- **Supported research on pedagogical interventions** to improve learning outcomes and core-concept retention in introductory psychology courses.
- **Guided students in reading, interpreting, and discussing empirical research articles**, including literature on dehumanization in interpersonal contexts.
- **Provided individualized tutoring** to primarily first-year psychology students enrolled in PSYC 110.
- **Advised fellow tutors** on effective strategies for addressing academic challenges in a rapidly evolving educational environment.

Counseling Interventionist Fall 2024

Imagining Possibilities in Post-Secondary Education

Supervisor: Dr. Erin Hardin, PhD

- **Delivered classroom instruction** to 9th–10th grade students on life skills, college preparation, and future planning.
- **Supervised and mentored adolescents (ages 14–18)** in group-based educational and counseling settings.

Summer Camp Counselor Summer 2024

Imagining Possibilities in Post-Secondary Education

Supervisor: Dr. Erin Hardin, PhD

- **Led and supervised daily camp activities**, monitoring camper well-being and engagement.
- **Coordinated programming and logistics** with staff across the University of Tennessee campus.
- **Fostered an inclusive and supportive learning environment** for students in grades 9–12.
- **Managed attendance and chaperoned transportation**, including bus travel to and from UT and Eastern Appalachia.

Campaign Manager Spring 2024

Vols 4 Dogs

Supervisor: Dr. Erin Smith, PhD

- **Led a fundraising and outreach campaign** in support of Paws & Badges, a Knoxville nonprofit training service dogs for veterans with PTSD.
- **Authored business correspondence and social media content** and coordinated scheduled outreach efforts.
- **Conducted one-on-one interviews with veterans**, documenting program impact and personal experiences.
- **Served as the primary liaison** between Vols 4 Dogs and Paws & Badges.
- **Provided weekly progress reports** to the faculty supervisor.
- **Raised over \$1,000** through a GoFundMe campaign.

Intern

Summer 2023, Summer 2024, Winter 2024

Ampro, Inc.

Supervisor: Jacob Irbash

- **Supported Research & Development and Quality Assurance laboratories** as a technical assistant.
- **Conducted product stability testing and organized experimental data** in accordance with industry standards.
- **Monitored manufacturing lines**, collecting and reporting quality-control data to supervisors.
- **Maintained laboratory organization** and assisted with relocation and setup of a new facility during Winter 2024.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

2025 - Present

REFERENCES

Dr. Sarah Lamer, PhD

Associate Professor

Head of Social Perception and Cognition Lab (SPAC)

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

slamer@vols.utk.edu

Dr. Erin Hardin, PhD

Interim Department Head

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

University of Tennessee Knoxville

ehardin7@utk.edu

Dr. Erin Smith, PhD

Distinguished Lecturer

Executive Director of Sundress Publications and the Sundress Academy for the Arts and 2023 Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellow

Department of English

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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