Welcome!

Congratulations on your acceptance to Carleton! As director of the Neuroscience program, I’m delighted to hear that you are interested in neuroscience and wanted to tell you a few things about the minor, which might help in your decision making.

The field of neuroscience is focused on understanding the nervous system, both in structure and function as well as with regard to control of body and behavior. The Carleton College neuroscience minor is fairly unique among colleges that offer a minor, but not a major, in that the Neuroscience Program has three dedicated NEUR courses: an introductory level course with lab, NEUR 127 Foundations of Neuroscience; a mid-level course with lab, NEUR 238/239 Neurons, Circuits, and Behavior, and an upper level seminar, NEUR 395 Neuroscience Capstone Seminar.

Those three courses, together with an introductory biology course, comprise the core of the minor. The goal is to establish a strong foundation in neuroscience through our core curriculum that students can then build upon by choosing electives that suit their particular interests. Many electives are offered by the Biology and Psychology departments, but electives are also available through Computer Science, Music, and Philosophy. The capstone seminar provides students with the opportunity to apply what they learned in minor courses, and to discuss the more complex, cutting-edge issues of neuroscience.

Our faculty enjoy teaching students about neuroscience but also have active research laboratories in which student researchers collaborate with professors to ask new experimental questions. Students from all class years work on research projects during the academic year and over summer and winter breaks. Faculty work with organisms that range from fruit flies and c. elegans to birds and mammals to better understand the contribution of neural structure and function to behavior. Faculty offices and labs are housed in our new, state of the art, integrated science facility.

No previous experience with Neuroscience is needed for you to join us! You might consider taking NEUR 127 Foundations of Neuroscience to get a feel for it! Many Neuroscience minors major in biology or psychology, however that is not a requirement. We have minors from many other departments here at the college. For a full description of the program see the Neuroscience Program website: https://www.carleton.edu/neuroscience/

Students in our program frequently go on to graduate school in neuroscience, psychology, neurobiology, or biochemistry – to name just a few areas! Many students also pursue health professions, or careers in teaching, policy, or law. We value the opportunity to work with talented, energetic, motivated students and aim to provide strong mentoring. We’d love the chance to meet you and talk about your interests.
As the Neuroscience director, I eagerly support students interested in neuroscience, whether to dip a toe in and get a flavor for the discipline, or to jump into the deep end! Please do not hesitate to contact me via email (smeerts@carleton.edu) should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Sarah Meerts
Associate Professor of Neuroscience & Psychology
Director of Neuroscience