

Update Speaker II

Leslie Stone-Roy



“Experiential activities to increase student engagement”

Saturday, October 26th, 2024

2:30 – 3:30 PM

School of Mines Green Center

Abstract: Engaged students learn and retain information better. In addition, universities and colleges strive to provide opportunities for students to learn more than academic content. For example, development of communication and organizational skills, as well as problem solving skills are important for college students to develop. Experiential activities can be used to help engage students with content and enhance learning. At Colorado State University, our experiential learning opportunities include a research-based course for undergraduates, and an annual community outreach program. The hands-on research course enables students to work in a laboratory setting for a semester. The students become involved in real research projects, develop and test hypotheses, work with peers, and strengthen communication skills. Students report a variety of benefits from taking the course. In addition, some students extend their experience through undergraduate thesis or independent study projects, which has led to student presentations at meetings and further learning and skill development. We also run a large outreach program associated with the global Brain Awareness Week effort. Participation in this program allows students to learn more about neuroscience and teach middle and high school students about specific topics through interactive stations. Students perceive multiple benefits from this program as well, including enhanced confidence with science communication and a better understanding of whether they want to incorporate teaching into their careers. Both the research course and outreach program can be developed around a variety of projects or topics, and the presentation will discuss how these experiential activities were developed and evidence that students find them rewarding.

Bio: Dr. Stone-Roy is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and in Molecular, Cellular and Integrative Neuroscience at Colorado State University (CSU). In addition, she is the university director for Brain Awareness Week activities and has led multiple neuroscience outreach activities for K-12 students and the general public. Her PhD and postdoctoral work focused on the gustatory system, and she has publications in a variety of fields including gustatory, olfactory, and somatosensory systems, sensory substitution, and pedagogy. Currently, Dr. Stone-Roy teaches multiple neuroscience courses including neuroanatomy, systems neurobiology, and a research course for undergraduate students. She also advises undergraduate thesis projects and mentors graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in teaching effectiveness.