

Dawn Rachelle Weatherford, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Research interests span cognitive psychology and applied psychology-law, with particular expertise in face recognition, eyewitness identification, visual attention, and social comparison processes. Work bridges laboratory-based cognitive research with real-world applications in security and educational settings, supported by over \$1.4 million in external and internal funding.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Psychology (Specialty: Cognition), Texas A&M University–Commerce, 2013

Dissertation: Visual and Verbal Influences on Recognition Memory for Faces

Advisor: Dr. Curt Carlson

M.S., Experimental Psychology, Texas A&M University–Commerce, 2011

B.S., Psychology, Summa Cum Laude (Highest Honors), Oklahoma State University, 2005

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Texas A&M University–San Antonio

Associate Professor of Psychology, 2021–present

Institutional Review Board Chair, 2022–present

Assistant Professor of Psychology, 2016–2021

Arkansas State University

Assistant Professor of Psychology, 2013–2016

Texas A&M University–Commerce

Graduate Research/Teaching Assistant, 2008–2013

RESEARCH LABORATORY LEADERSHIP

Director, Memory, Attention, and Perception (MAP) Research Laboratory, Texas A&M University–San Antonio, 2016–present

Co-Director, Social Comparison (SoCo) Research Laboratory, Texas A&M University–San Antonio, 2023–present

Director, Memory, Attention, and Perception (MAP) Research Laboratory, Arkansas State University, 2013–2016

HONORS AND AWARDS

Distinguished Faculty Mentor, Department of Health & Behavioral Sciences, 2024 and 2025

Distinguished Tenured Faculty Service, College of Arts and Sciences, 2024

Distinguished Junior Scholar – Rising Star, Texas A&M University–San Antonio, 2021

Excellence in Teaching, College of Arts & Sciences, 2021

Alumni Ambassador, Department of Psychology, Counseling, and SPED, 2016–2017

Dr. Paul Zelhart Distinguished Graduate Researcher, 2012–2013

Outstanding Graduate Student, Psychology/Counseling Graduate Student Association, 2012–2013

First Place Graduate Student Presentation, Southwestern Psychological Association, 2011

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Total funding secured: over \$1.4 million

External Grants

Principal Investigator (2022). National Science Foundation. Through the ups and downs: Social comparison processes for minority students attending minority-majority institutions. **\$464,391.**

Principal Investigator (2022). State of Texas Civil Money Penalty (CMP) Reinvestment. Bingocize: Social and physical engagement to enhance quality of life. **\$374,211.**

Co-Investigator (2019). National Institutes of Health, P51 Supplement. Enhancement of the SNPRC marmoset program (Ross, PI). **\$423,597.**

Principal Investigator (2018). Claude D. Pepper Center, Barshop Institute, UTHSCSA Pilot Grant. Working memory and attention in aging marmosets. **\$49,986.**

Principal Investigator (2017–2018). American Psychology-Law Society Early Career Investigator Award. You shall not pass: How professional security expertise shapes visual search for fake IDs. **\$5,000.**

Student Research Awards (as Faculty Advisor)

Psi Chi (International Psychological Honor Society) Undergraduate Research Grants (2019, 2024, 2025). Total: **\$7,500.**

Internal Grants

Texas A&M University–San Antonio

College of Arts & Sciences Research Grants (2017, 2018, 2020, 2023). **\$17,915 total.**

Strategic Planning Seed Funding Initiative (2018). **\$22,000 total.**

Provost's Research Council Grant (2020). **\$10,000.**

Internal Funding (2020). Building bridges to improve social communication for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Co-PI with Garfield). **\$12,750.**

Arkansas State University

Faculty Research Support (2015–2016). The effects of context and consequences on unfamiliar identity matching. **\$5,000.**

Texas A&M University–Commerce

Graduate Summer Research Support (2012). Visual and verbal influences in unfamiliar face recognition. **\$4,583.**

STEM Research Grant (2010). The description-identification relationship for unfamiliar facial recognition. **\$5,000.**

Sabbaticals and Research Leave

Research Sabbatical, Fall 2025, Texas A&M University–San Antonio. International collaboration with researchers at University of Queensland, Australian National University, University of New South Wales, and Macquarie University.

PUBLICATIONS

Author of 30+ peer-reviewed articles; 15+ include undergraduate co-authors; 5 book chapters.

†undergraduate student collaborator · ^graduate student collaborator

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

In Preparation

- Weatherford, D. R.**, Carlson, C., Carlson, M., Rodriguez, A.†, Aranda, D.†, & Wieters, N.^ (in preparation). Are you afraid of the dark? The impact of lighting as a memory cue in facial recognition.
- Wieters, N. H.^, **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Pardo, R. M.^ (in preparation). How do dual tasks affect ID verification? A mobile eye-tracking analysis.
- Lilley, M. K., **Weatherford, D. R.** (corresponding author), Guerra, M. D.^, Thomas, J.^, Castellanos, I.†, Halperin, A.†, Arguello, J. R. M.†, & Huynh, H. P. (rejected, finalizing revised submission). Why do students compare? Examining social comparison types and motives of Hispanic students attending a Hispanic majority institution.

Under Review / Under Revision

- Weatherford, D. R.**, Wieters, N. H.^, Pardo, R.^, Daggett, E.^, White, B.^, Morquecho, A.†, & Hout, M. C. (under revision). The FACETS Database [Faces Across Cameras, Time, Emotions, and Settings] rated for similarity.
- Lilley, M. K., **Weatherford, D. R.**, Thomas, J.^, & Huynh, H. P. (under revision). Initial evidence for the effectiveness of the Psychology Research Experience Preparedness (PREP) program.
- Thomas, J.^, Acosta, A.†, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Lilley, M. K., & Huynh, H. P. (under review). Centering belonging: A systematic review of factors associated with Hispanic students' sense of belonging in higher education.

Published

- Thomas, J.^, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Lilley, M. K., & Huynh, H. P. (2026). Social comparison, stress, and belonging among undergraduates at a Hispanic majority institution.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Carlson, C. A., Krueger, L., Williams, C. R.^, & Pardo, R. M.^ (2026). Different types of facial description alter the confidence-accuracy relationship.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Dicke-Bohmann, A. K., Roberson, D.†, Erickson, W. B., & Thomas, J.^ (2026). The role of attentional interventions and individual differences in the detection of low prevalence fake IDs.
- Thomas, J.^, Guerra, M. D.^, Reiss, J. J.^, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Garcia-Martinez, L.†, Lilley, M. K., & Huynh, H. P. (2026). Pathways to purpose: How belonging, stress, and optimism predict career aspirations in Hispanic majority institutions.
- Reiss, J. J.^, Thomas, J.^, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Lilley, M. K., Acosta, A.†, & Huynh, H. P. (2026). Strength in community: Optimism's role in explaining the relationship between stress and belongingness for minoritized college students.
- Huynh, H. P., Thomas, J.^, Arguello, J.†, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Halperin, A.†, Castellanos, I.†, & Lilley, M. K. (2025). The relevance of social comparison to academic self-concept for undergraduates at Hispanic majority institutions. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15381927251363149>
- Huynh, H. P., Luo, W.†, Eche, E.†, Thomas, J.^, **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Lilley, M. K. (2025). Associations between intellectual humility, academic motivation, and academic self-efficacy. *Psychological Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941251351243>
- Huynh, H. P., Thomas, J.^, Castellanos, I.†, **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Lilley, M. K. (2024). Social comparison, belongingness, self-doubt, and stress: The case of Hispanic students at Hispanic majority schools. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 46(2), 99–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863241292243>
- Lilley, M. K., Castellanos, I.†, Wicks, A.†, Raya, A.†, **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Huynh, H. P. (2024). Training the future: Themes from a content analysis of psychology lab manuals. *Teaching of Psychology*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283241283057>

- Huynh, H. P., Wicks, A.†, Raya, A.†, Castellanos, I.†, **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Lilley, M. K. (2024). Social comparison processes of Hispanic students at Hispanic majority institutions. *Psychological Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941241241641>
- Erickson, W. B., & **Weatherford, D. R.** (2023). Measuring the contributions of perceptual and attentional processes in the complete composite face paradigm. *Vision*, 7(4), 76. [Special Issue: Face Recognition and Cognition]. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vision7040076>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Roberson, D. M.†, & Erickson, W. B. (2021). When experience does not promote expertise: Security professionals fail to detect low prevalence fake IDs. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*. [Special Issue: Visual Search in Real World and Applied Contexts]. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-021-00288-z>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Meltzer, M. A., Carlson, C. A., & Bartlett, J. C. (2021). Never forget a face: Verbalization facilitates recollection as evidenced by flexible responding to contrasting recognition memory tests. *Memory & Cognition*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-020-01085-7>
- Lockamy, R. F., Carlson, C. A., Jones, A. R.∧, Carlson, M. A., & **Weatherford, D. R.** (2020). The effect of viewing distance on empirical discriminability and the confidence-accuracy relationship for eyewitness identification. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 34(5), 1047–1060. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3683>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Esparza, L. V.†, Tedder, L.†, & Hitchcock, O.∧ (2020). Using a fork for a hairbrush: Investigating the dual routes to release from functional fixedness. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.442>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Erickson, W. B., Thomas, J.†, Walker, M. E.†, & Schein, B. S.† (2020). You shall not pass: How facial variability and feedback affect the detection of low-prevalence fake IDs. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 5, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-019-0204-1> [Featured content, Psychonomic Society]
- Whittington, J. E., Carlson, C. A., Carlson, M. A., **Weatherford, D. R.**, Krueger, L. E., & Jones, A. R.∧ (2020). Asking an eyewitness to predict their later lineup performance could harm the confidence-accuracy relationship. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 34(1), 119–131. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3599>
- Carlson, C. A., Jones, A. R.∧, Goodsell, C. A., Carlson, M. A., **Weatherford, D. R.**, Whittington, J. E., & Lockamy, R. F. (2019). A method for increasing empirical discriminability and eliminating top-row preference in photo arrays. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3551>
- Mickes, L., Seale-Carlisle, T. M., Wetmore, S. A., Gronlund, S. D., Clark, S. E., Carlson, C. A., Goodsell, C. A., **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Wixted, J. T. (2017). ROCs in eyewitness identification: Instructions versus confidence ratings. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 31, 467–477. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3344>
- Carlson, C. A., Gibson-Dias, J. L., **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Carlson, M. A. (2017). An investigation of the weapon focus effect and the confidence-accuracy relationship for eyewitness identification. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 6(1), 82–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2016.04.001>
- Carlson, C. A., Pleasant, W. E.∧, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Carlson, M. A., & Bednarz, J. E.∧ (2016). The weapon focus effect: Testing an extension of the unusualness hypothesis. *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice*, 12(2).
- Carlson, C. A., Carlson, M. A., **Weatherford, D. R.**, Tucker, A.†, & Bednarz, J.∧ (2016). The effect of backloading instructions on eyewitness identification from simultaneous and sequential lineups. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 30(6), 1005–1013. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3292>
- Carlson, C. A., Young, D.∧, **Weatherford, D. R.**, Carlson, M. A., Bednarz, J.∧, & Jones, A. J.∧ (2016). The influence of perpetrator exposure time and weapon presence/timing on eyewitness confidence and accuracy. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 30(6), 898–910. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3275>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Schein, B. H.† (2015). Mismatch prevalence influences response bias and discriminability in unfamiliar face matching. *Journal of Vision*, 15(12), 697. <https://doi.org/10.1167/15.12.697>

- Alogna, V. K., Attaya, M. K., Aucoin, P., Bahník, S., Birch, S., ... **Weatherford, D. R.**, ... Zwaan, R. A. (2014). Registered replication report: Schooler and Engstler-Schooler (1990). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9(5), 556–578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614545653>
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Bartlett, J. C., & Carlson, C. A. (2013). Perceptual attention to features and traits may affect how faces are represented in memory. *Journal of Vision*, 13, 981. <https://doi.org/10.1167/13.9.981>
- Carlson, C. A., Gronlund, S. D., **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Carlson, M. A. (2012). Processing differences between feature-based facial composites and photos of real faces. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 26, 525–540. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.2824>
- Hawthorne, M. J., **Weatherford, D. R.**, & Tochkov, K. (2011). The effects of explicit and implicit cognitive factors on learning patterns in the Iowa gambling task. *American Journal of Psychology*, 7, 64–78.

Book Chapters

- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Erickson, W. B. (2024). Under his eye: Concealing and revealing identities in Gilead. In T. Langley (Ed.), *Handmaid's Tale Psychology*.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Moore, K. (2024). Adaptive memory research in forensic face matching and memory. In M. Toglia (Ed.), *What is Adaptive About Adaptive Memory* (2nd ed.).
- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Erickson, W. B. (2023). The now-memories: The nostalgic appeal of Stranger Things. In T. Langley (Ed.), *Stranger Things Psychology*.
- Erickson, W. B., & **Weatherford, D. R.** (2018). Suspending disbelief: Circumventing person perception to deliver the ultimate vacation. In T. Langley (Ed.), *Westworld Psychology: Violent Delights*. Sterling Publishers.
- Erickson, W. B., & **Weatherford, D. R.** (2016). All poor problem solvers must die. In T. Langley (Ed.), *The Psychology of the Game of Thrones: The Mind is Dark and Full of Terrors*. Sterling Publishers.

Book Reviews

- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Erickson, W. B. (2016). The most compelling research on handedness is mixed. *PsycCRITIQUES*, 61(25). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0040504>

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Over 80 professional presentations at national and international conferences. A selection of recent work is listed below.

National and International Presentations (Selected, 2022–2025)

- Weatherford, D. R.**, Wieters, N. H.[^], Pardo, R. M.[^], Matias, S.[†], Sullivan, C.[†], & Arguello, J. R.[†] (2025, May). Comparing face matching accuracy and bias in a standardized versus ID card task: A mobile eye tracking study. *Association for Psychological Science*, Washington, DC. (Oral and Poster)
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Lilley, M. K., Thomas, J.[^], Castellanos, I.[†], & Huynh, H. P. (2025, May). Tools of the trade: Introducing the Psychology Research Experience Preparation (PREP) training program. *Association for Psychological Science*, Washington, DC.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Wieters, N.[^], Pardo, R.[^], Daggett, E.[^], White, B.[^], & Hout, M. C. (2024, November). Multi-dimensional similarity spaces for the FACETS database: Faces Across Cameras, Time, Emotions, and Settings. *Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society*, New York City, NY.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Wieters, N.[^], Pardo, R.[^], Matias, S.[†], & Sullivan, C.[†] (2024, September). Can eye tracking metrics predict performance on a physical ID matching task? *International Association for Craniofacial Identification*, Granada, Spain (and Virtual).
- Weatherford, D. R.**, Gooding, S.[†], & Erickson, W. B. (2023, November). Dark triad correlates of recognition memory. *Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society*, San Francisco, CA.
- Weatherford, D. R.**, & Dicke-Bohmann, A. K. (2022, November). The effect of attentional template disruption on the detection of low prevalence fake ID cards. *Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society*, Boston, MA.

RESEARCH MENTORING

Graduate Students

Primary advisor for M.S. candidates; 3 theses completed as chair in 2025; additional students supported as committee member.

Current Students

Gabriella Cantu[^] (M.S. in progress): Dyadic facial description and matching accuracy.

Jasmine R. Nichols[^] (M.S. in progress): Facial recognition technology and policing.

Completed Theses (as Chair)

Matthew D. Guerra[^] (2026). Intellectual humility and political cognition.

Nathan H. Wieters[^] (2025). How do dual tasks affect ID verification? A mobile eye-tracking analysis.

Roman M. Pardo[^] (2025). Going gray too early? The effects of color on facial identification.

Jasmyne Thomas[^] (2025). Social comparison, stress, and belonging among undergraduates at a Hispanic majority institution. (*Second Place People's Choice Award, 3MT Competition*)

Undergraduate Research Program

80+ undergraduate researchers mentored since 2016, producing 15+ peer-reviewed publications with undergraduate co-authors, 100+ conference presentations, and numerous external research awards. Students routinely gain admission to graduate programs across the United States.

SERVICE

Editorial and Review Service

Journal Reviewer: Applied Cognitive Psychology; Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics; Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition; Journal of the Association for Research in Memory and Cognition; Memory; Psychological Reports; Psychology, Crime, and Law; Scientific Reports.

Conference Reviewer: American Psychology-Law Society; Southwestern Psychological Association; ARMADILLO Southwest Cognition Conference.

Professional Organization Leadership

ARMADILLO Conference: Social Media Coordinator, 2021–present.

Psychology, Crime, and Law: Social Media Editor, 2021–present.

Psychonomic Society: Communications Committee Member, 2020–2023.

University Service

Institutional Review Board: Chair, 2022–present; Vice Chair, 2019–2021; Member, 2017–2019.

Council of Principal Investigators: Member, 2023–present.

College Honors and Awards Committee: Chair, 2021–2023.

Student Honors and Awards Committee: Member, 2024–present.

Faculty Evaluation Committee: Chair, 2023; Member, 2022–present.

Faculty Search Committee: Chair, 2023–present.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Psychology-Law Society · American Psychological Association · Association for Psychological Science · Psychonomic Society · Midwestern Psychological Association · Object Perception, Attention, and Memory Society · Society for Applied Multivariate Research · Society for the Teaching of Psychology · Southwest Cognition Society · Southwestern Psychological Association · Vision Sciences Society · Psi Chi International Psychological Honor Society

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES

Experimental Design: E-Prime, Psychology Experiment Building Language (PEBL), CANTAB, ABET, Tobii Glasses Collector and Analyzer.

Online Research: SONA, Qualtrics, Amazon Mechanical Turk, Prolific.

Statistical Analysis: SPSS/PASW, JASP, R (intermediate).

Programming: Python (intermediate).

OPEN EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH RESOURCES

Psychology Research Experience Preparedness (PREP) Program: Open educational modules and lab manual templates designed to scaffold undergraduate research training. NSF-supported and freely available. <https://tinyurl.com/preppsyh>

FACETS Database (Faces Across Cameras, Time, Emotions, and Settings): Open-access face image database developed to support research on facial recognition, identification, and emotion perception across ecologically valid conditions. Available via the Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/brxmn/>

MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PsychSessions Podcast, Sidebar 29 (October 2025): *Psychology Research Experience Preparedness (PREP) Program*. <https://psychsessions.org/2025/10/14/sidebar-29-psychology-research-experience-preparedness-prep-program/>

Psychonomic Society Featured Content (2020): *Is that you? Detecting low-occurring fake IDs*.

PBS SciTech Now (2018): *Detecting fake IDs* (national television feature).