

SAARA UTHMAAN

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Education

- 2023–2026** Bachelor of Science in Informatics, Information School, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- 2021–2026** Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing, English Department, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Research Experience — University of Washington

- 2025–** Incoming Capstone Project: *Mapping Somali Poetry in Washington State*
- 2025–** **Research Assistant, Center for Learning, Computing, and Imagination, Imagining Culturally Responsive Help-Seeking**
Conducted grant proposal editing (\$5,000 awarded), co-designed the study and futures workshop based on insights from a pilot study, recruited participants, and performed thematic analysis.
- 2025–** **Research Assistant, UW Interactive Data Lab, Supporting Visualization Novices in Verifying AI Hallucinations in D3 Code**
Independently led and designed a study on AI hallucination verification, preparing for IRB submission.
- 2023–2024** **Research Assistant, AVELA – A Vision for Engineering Literacy and Access, Scalable Community Mentorship: A Vision for Engineering Literacy & Access**
Coded and thematically analyzed qualitative data, conducted affinity diagramming, co-wrote a paper, and served as first co-author on a 2025 WEEF publication.
- 2024** **Research Assistant, UW Interactive Data Lab, Assessing the Impact of Large Language Models on Learning Data Visualization Libraries**
Collaboratively designed and conducted a study; adapted Bloom's Taxonomy; secured IRB approval; developed interview and recruitment protocols; conducted eight semi-structured interviews; recruited participants; performed thematic analysis; and presented findings at eight conferences.
Funded by NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates & DUB REU
- 2023** **Undergraduate Researcher, Summer Institute in Arts and Humanities, Poetic Passage: Rhythmic Rise to Resilience**
Conducted a literature review and content/poetry analysis, creating a collage poem and audio from poet recordings, and writing one original poem.
Funded by the Mary Gates Research Scholarship

Professional Experience

- 2025-** Career Fellow, CodePath: Guided 400+ students on career readiness (LinkedIn, resume, GitHub); developed resources to optimize the CodePath Career Center experience.
- 2023-** Instructor, AVELA- A Vision for Engineering Literacy and Access: Taught multiple 12-week STEM courses to 120+ middle/high school students.
- 2023-** Writing Tutor, University of Washington - Instructional Center: Supported 300+ students across all writing stages; guided admission to selective programs
- 2024–2025** Data in Action Research Mentor, MIT FutureMakers: Mentored 36 students in research methods and data analysis; guided community research with the Vera Institute of Justice.
- 2023** Website Development Curriculum Designer, AVELA- A Vision for Engineering Literacy and Access: Co-developed HTML/CSS/JavaScript curriculum; implemented in 15+ course sessions.

Publications

(* = Authors contributed equally)

Peer-Reviewed Conference Papers

- 2024** **Uthmaan, S.***, Johnson, K.* , Arroyos, V.* , Hussein, L.* , Cora, A.* , Sherif, E.* , Garcia, C.* , Barrett, T.* , Shirazy, S.* , Cunningham, J., Shapiro, R. B., & Iyer, V. *Scalable Community Mentorship: A Vision for Engineering Literacy & Access. 2024 World Engineering Education Forum - Global Engineering Deans Council (WEEF-GEDC), Sydney, Australia, pp. 1–9. DOI: 10.1109/WEEF-GEDC63419.2024.10854949.*

Presentations

- 2025** **Uthmaan, S.**, Lu, M., & Han, M. (2025, December). *Student experience using artificial intelligence in academic context.*
- 2024** **Uthmaan, S.***, Shirazy, S.* , Barrett, T., Battle, L. *Assessing the Impact of Large Language Models on Learning Data Visualization Libraries.*

Oral presentations:

- National Society of Black Engineers Region VI Fall Regional Conference (November, 2024)
- Academic Data Science Alliance (November, 2024),
- Washington NASA Space Grant Consortium (August, 2024)

Poster presentations:

- Microsoft Research Task Focused IR in the Era of Generative AI (September, 2024)
- CMD-IT/ACM Richard Tapia Conference (September, 2024)
- Design Use Build REU Research Symposium (August, 2024)

- 2024** Shirazy, S.* , Cora, A.* , **Uthmaan, S.**, Johnson, K., Sherif, E., Iyer, V., Ben Shapiro, R. *Leveraging AI to Improve STEM Engagement for Black & Latine Youth.* Poster presented at the UW Undergraduate Research Symposium (May 2024).

- 2023** **Uthmaan, S.** *Poetic passage: Rhythmic rise to resilience.* Creative project presented at SIAH: A Black Sense: On Time, Art, and Being Symposium (Aug 2023).

Invited Panels

2025 Undergrad Leaders Panel, *Gabriel E. Gallardo Symposium 2025*

HONORS and AWARDS

Fellowships

2024 University of Washington McNair Scholar

Travel Grants

2024 Academic Data Science Alliance Conference

2024 STARS Celebration (\$1,000)

Scholarships / Awards

2024 Emile Pitre Instructional Center Tutor Scholar (\$2,000)

2024 Kabir Shahani and Noreen Ramji Endowed Scholarship in Informatics (\$2,600)

2024 Imam Generational Scholarship Fund (\$5,000)

2023 Mary Gates Research Scholarship (\$5,000)

2021 TRIO Perseverance Award

Volunteer & Community

2025 Commitment to Service Awardee: Recognizes outstanding student leadership and dedication to community service and civic engagement.

- 2024– Co-Founder, ECHO - Exploring Careers Helping Others
- 2024– Mentor, NSBE Big Little Mentorship Program
- 2024–2025 President, Black in Informatics, *Breakout Organization Award*
- 2024–2025 Outreach Lead, AVELA- A Vision for Engineering Literacy and Access
- 2024–2025 PCI Planning Committee Member, NSBE Pre-Collegiate Initiative
- 2024–2025 Vice President of Communications, ColorStack UW
- 2023–2024 Director of Diversity Efforts, Black in Informatics

Technical Skills

Research Methods: Interviews (semi and structured), Affinity Diagramming, Survey Design, Thematic Analysis, Heuristic Evaluation, A/B Testing, Usability Testing, User Persona, Content analysis, Mixed methods Analysis.

Coding: Python, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, D3.js.

Tools: Zotero, Figma, Miro.

Programming : Python, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, R.

Writing: Grant writing, academic writing, brainstorming.

Professional Memberships

Black in AI (2025–present), UW Interactive Data Lab (2024–present), DUB (2023–present), Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program (2024 – present), Step to the Doctorate (2025 – 2025), STARS Computing Corps (STARS)(2024 – 2024), ACM (2024–2024), Brown University Preview Participant