

Alex Alvarez

U.S. Citizen

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EDUCATION

Texas A&M University

B.S. in Computer Science, Minor in Psychology

College Station, TX

August 2019 – December 2025

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Intern

Harvard Medical School

May 2025 – Present

Boston, MA

• Recovery Research Institute

Advisors: **Alex Russell** and **Samuel Acuff**

- Leading an on-going blinded qualitative study comparing AI-generated versus human therapist responses by MI-trained clinicians.
- Fine-tuned HIPPA-compliant LLMs with patient/therapist transcripts and synthetic data. Developed an evolutionary technique to generate synthetic data for fine-tuning.
- Created an AI-based online screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) tool for substance use disorder.

Undergraduate Researcher

Texas A&M University

May 2024 – Present

College Station, TX

• Brain Networks Lab

Advisor: **Yoonsuck Choe**

- Co-authored “Saliency Thresholds in Neural Code and its Relation to the Power-Law, Gaussian, and Lambert W Function”, accepted to the NeurIPS 2025 Workshop on Symmetry and Geometry in Neural Representations, introducing a computational framework linking Lambert W, power-law response distributions, and saliency thresholds in neural code.
- Authored a commentary (invited by Behavioral and Brain Sciences) on Anil Seth’s model of consciousness, focusing on self-modeling, embodiment, and the neural correlates of awareness.
- Developed neuroevolutionary simulations to model the emergence of homing vectors and allocentric navigation, inspired by Gaby Maimon’s drosophila spatial navigation studies.

• Cognitive Science Lab

Advisor: **Takashi Yamauchi**

- Leading a study to identify and causally manipulate “steering vectors” in large language models corresponding to personality and cognitive dispositions.
- Ran human decision-making studies in the lab and contributed to data collection, trial design, and analysis of reasoning under uncertainty.
- Conducted layer-wise analyses exploring how large language models represent and differentiate modal reasoning categories such as inconceivable, impossible, and improbable concepts.

• Bolaños Lab

Advisor: **Carlos Bolaños**

- Conducting comprehensive pharmacological-behavioral studies in rodent models, including drug administration, behavioral phenotyping, terminal tissue collection with rapid brain extraction and flash freezing, cryosectioning, and region-specific micropunch dissection.
- Performing molecular analyses from tissue to data, including full PCR workflows (RNA/DNA isolation, quantification, amplification), fluorescence microscopy of brain sections, and developed a custom ImageJ macro for automated quantification of c-Fos expression.

Founder

Volk

December 2019 – December 2023

Houston, TX

- Built, bought, and sold E-commerce brands.
- Multiple six and seven-figure exits and acquisitions. Over 100M+ total impressions and millions of organic followers across brands.
- My friends and I pioneered "organic social media marketing" during the wild wild west era of social media ads. It's now a widely used and formalized marketing strategy. It was a lot of fun but I'm no longer interested in it.

Founder

Molly & The Mop

August 2022 – December 2023

Houston, TX

- Online company that connected commercial and residential service providers with clients.
- 15+ employees, 85k+ followers on social media.
- Sold to a private local company.

Software Engineer Intern

TD Ameritrade/Charles Schwab

June 2022 – August 2022

Chicago, IL

- Implemented a CI/CD automation pipeline for TD Ameritrade software releases using a wide tech stack including Bamboo and Puppet.
- Created a server monitoring interface for Schwab and TDA live servers still being used internally to monitor all of Schwab's servers.

PUBLICATIONS

Accepted

1. **Alex Alvarez***, Jin Hyun Park*, & Yoonsuck Choe (2025). Saliency Thresholds in Neural Code and its Relation to the Power-Law, Gaussian, and Lambert W Function. *NeurReps 2025 (Accepted)* [OpenReview].

In Preparation

2. **Alex Alvarez**, Samhita Bollepally, & Takashi Yamauchi. (in preparation). The You-Axis: Invoking Personal Voice through a Single Direction in Latent Space.
3. **Alex Alvarez**, Samuel F. Acuff, & Alex M. Russell. (in preparation). Comparative Evaluation of AI-Generated vs. Human Therapist Motivational Interviewing Responses: A Blinded Expert Rating Study

OPEN-ENDEDNESS & EVOLUTIONARY INTELLIGENCE PROJECTS

DGM for Drug Discovery

2025

Self-improving LLM-based Drug Discovery

- Developed a self-improving open-ended evolutionary system to create drug-like molecules.
- Uses novelty search algorithms with hierarchical mutation strategies (genetic and LLM-assisted) and self-improving prompt refinement through empirical assessment of Quantitative Estimate of Drug-likeness (QED). [Github Link]

AbloEh

2025

Open-ended Fashion Search

- Interactive evolutionary design platform using Compositional Pattern Producing Networks (CPPNs) to generate and evolve 3D garment designs through human selection. [Site] [Github]

SynthBreeder

2025

Open-Ended Evolution of Synthesized Sounds

- Applied novelty search and quality-diversity algorithms to audio waveform generation.
- Evolved sonic “phenotypes” without explicit human reward, exploring emergent structure and timbre. [Site] [Github]

Evolutionary Synthetic Data Generation

2025

LLMs for Generation and Self-Evaluation, Evolutionary Algorithms for Search

- Novel evolutionary technique for creating synthetic text data with the use of LLMs.
- Designed to solve data scarcity problems in historically siloed or restricted clinical patient data.

Open-Ended Reward Evolution for Addiction Modeling

Present

Hidden Reward Signals and Emergent Maladaptive Behaviors

- Co-evolved agents and reward landscapes to study how certain evolutionary paths and genomes are resistant to addiction.
- Investigated emergence of competing reward systems inspired by POET and neuroeconomics.
- Investigating how the relationship between cue strength and reward-cue onset latency shapes maladaptive, addiction-like behavior.

Neural Compass Agent (Vector-Based Navigation)

2024

NEAT + Reinforcement Learning for Emergent Spatial Reasoning

- Developed an agent capable of fly-like vector navigation using 2D accelerometric memory and rotational invariance based on Gaby Maimon’s drosophila spatial navigation studies.
- Combined NEAT evolution with RL to study emergence of spatial memory, vector inversion, and homing behavior.
- Demonstrated that simple architectures can evolve robust “path integration” and reward-return strategies. [Github Link]

NOTABLE PROJECTS

F(AI)ght Club

2025

Founded a "Secret" AI Club at TAMU

- Link: alexrez.com/shhhh. Password: "turing"

Demographic IQ

October 2024

Voter Decision-Support Application

- Visualized how the user's income would change depending on their demographic information and which presidential candidate was elected.
- Used non-partisan data sources for each candidate's official policy proposals.
- TIDAL hackathon winner and featured in KBTX News. [Press Link] [Web App Link].

TIC-Bot

Summer 2024

Intelligent Tutoring System and Education Tool

- LLM-based intelligent tutoring system fine-tuned on instructor transcripts. [Link to PDF.]
- Later merged with PhD student Rujun Gao's thesis and is currently being used for a chemical engineering course at TAMU.
- Rujun is now Co-founder & CEO of Encando.AI, an AI for Education spin-off.

Zyntora

2021

Virtual Real Estate/Social Media Startup

- Allowed users to buy and sell "LU" (a fixed share of a creator's advertising space) and thereby gain exposure in that creator's feed.
- The idea was that as a creator got more popular, the value of their LU would increase, acting as a kind of speculative asset tied to a creator's future success.
- 1000+ peak monthly users. [Website Link]

AWARDS & HONORS

Brandon Rogers Endowed Memorial Scholarship

2025

Michael W Powell Computer Science Scholarship

2025

Sara & Andrew Fikes Scholarship

2024-2025

NSF REU Award

2024

TAMU Undergraduate Engineering Grant x2

2022-2023, 2024-2025

TAMU IAP Scholarship

2021

SKILLS

Technical: Python, PyTorch, NumPy, SciPy, Pandas, scikit-learn, Matplotlib, NEAT-Python, OpenAI Gym, TensorFlow, HuggingFace Transformers, Jupyter Notebook, OpenCV, PyTorch Geometric, Swift, LaTeX, Git, Docker, and Linux.

Languages: English & Spanish