

Denicia Espinosa Aragon

Quantitative UX Researcher

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MISSION: Social Neuroscience Psychologist with 5+ years of experience in human-subject research, specializing in experimental and survey research to understand human behavior change. Proven track record of in structuring research for long-term impact through meticulous documentation, future-proofed coding, and cross-functional collaboration. Recognized for effective communication, community building, and leadership.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Social Psychology with Data Science Specialization

University of Oregon | Eugene, OR

Anticipated Date for Comprehensive Exams: **April 2025**

Expected Graduation: **December 2026**

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Political Science

University of New Mexico | Albuquerque, NM

March 2015 - December 2019

SKILLS

- **Scripting Languages** | R, Python, Bash, MATLAB, Java
- **Software Tools** | GIT, Anaconda, LaTeX, Shell Scripting, Docker, Shiny, Jupyter Lab, Confluence, Teams, SharePoint, Jira
- **Statistics** | Time Series Analysis, Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools, Supervised and Unsupervised Machine Learning, Multilevel Mixed Models, Network Analysis, Clustering, Bootstrapping
- **Data Expertise** | | Qualitative, Quantitative, Longitudinal, Dyadic, Social Networks, Neuroimaging, Nested, Survey and Experimental Design

SELECT PROJECTS

McNair Scholars Program Evaluation on Student Success and Experience | Applied Behavioral Researcher

- **Led a multi-year mixed-methods evaluation** of the McNair Scholars Program to identify behavioral drivers of student success, revealing that mentorship and belonging were key psychological levers influencing persistence and achievement.
- **Synthesized longitudinal qualitative and quantitative findings into actionable insights**, directly informing program management decisions, student support strategies, and competitive grant proposals.

Engineered a custom R Shiny application that maps student perspectives across multiple cohorts on belongingness using dynamic heat maps and semantic analysis, supporting campus climate initiatives | UO SL-OAR

- **Built-in programming and package version control**, ensuring long-term functionality and stability of the website. Implemented a Docker container to enhance scalability and reproducibility, leading to seamless integration across multiple environments. **This solution was recognized as a best practice for sustainable web-based research tools within the department.**
- **Delivered key findings via presentations and dashboards to student organizations and administrative stakeholders**, enabling data-informed decision-making to improve institutional belongingness and inclusion strategies.

Future Self and Career Planning: Identifying Student Needs and Barriers to Success | Doctoral Researcher

- **Utilized Large Language Models and Machine Learning** to explore barriers in career planning for +1000 students, including topic modeling, cosign similarity, and supervised machine learning to examine demographic variations in reported obstacles, **guiding tailored outreach programs for underserved student populations.**
- **Led research on future self-identification as a predictor of career planning**, identifying key relationships between vividness and college year, and uncovering demographic differences in the number of perceived barriers, **improving intervention strategies for student career services.**

EXPERIENCE

Data Analyst Intern

October 2023 – Present

University of Oregon Student Life Office of Assessment and Research (UO SL-OAR)

- Synthesized complex datasets to measure student well-being and flourishing resulting in actionable insights, such as recommending more resources be allocated to address food insecurity, positively impacting 100+ students annually.
- Led cross-functional collaboration with data analysts across 15+ departments to standardize data collection, processing, and analysis, ensuring accuracy and consistency in institutional research.

Doctoral Researcher

September 2021-Present

Social Affective Neuroscience Lab | University of Oregon

Eugene, OR

- Conduct research on future-oriented thinking and decision-making, examining how time perspective, identity, and goal-setting influence decision-making. Use neuroimages and advanced quantitative methods, including linear and non-linear regression and natural language processing, to analyze large-scale survey and text data.
- Instructor on Record for upper division research methods and assistant instructor for statistics courses, achieving above average review ratings from students and colleagues.
- Mentored 10+ undergraduate and master's students, guiding them through independent research projects that were successfully presented at national psychology and university conferences, strengthening their research and leadership skills.