

## Daphna Shohamy Appointed Associate Director of Columbia's Zuckerman Institute

*Expert in learning, memory and decision-making joins leadership at the Institute*

NEW YORK — Columbia's Zuckerman Institute today announces that Principal Investigator [Daphna Shohamy, PhD](#), has been named Associate Director of the Institute. Dr. Shohamy has been a valued member of the Institute since its conception. In her new role, she will work alongside current CEO and Director [Rui Costa, DVM, PhD](#), as the institute transitions leadership.

"I am very excited to join my colleagues in leading the Zuckerman Institute," said Dr. Shohamy. "Being part of this rich and interdisciplinary scientific community has played a formative role in shaping my own research. I am looking forward to contributing to the growth of the Institute, supporting our colleagues and students here, and continuing to expand our interactions with the broader community across the university."

As Associate Director, Dr. Shohamy will work with Dr. Costa and Co-directors [Richard Axel, MD](#), and [Eric Kandel, MD](#), on the scientific, financial and administrative management of the Institute. She also will also establish and direct a new cognitive neuroscience center.

"We are thrilled that Dr. Shohamy is joining the leadership of the Institute," said Dr. Costa, on behalf of himself, Dr. Axel and Dr. Kandel. "This will allow us to further bolster the culture of interdisciplinarity and collaboration at the Zuckerman Institute and accelerate our pursuit of transformative science with the goal of understanding the human brain."

Dr. Shohamy studies learning, memory and decision-making. In 2021, Columbia University named her to lead its [Kavli Institute for Brain Science](#), which she co-directs with [Larry Abbott, PhD](#), and appointed her Kavli Professor of Brain Science. She is a valued teacher and mentor in the Department of Psychology and a member of the training faculty for the Columbia Doctoral Program in Neurobiology and Behavior. Dr. Shohamy is also an important contributor to undergraduate education at Columbia, teaching the science of the brain and mind to the entire incoming class of college students as part of Columbia's Core Frontiers of Science course.

The interdisciplinary research in Dr. Shohamy's lab explores how we learn from experience, how we form memories and how past experience shapes our decisions. Her lab investigates

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these questions by combining functional magnetic resonance brain imaging, computational modeling, and studies of patients with neurological and psychiatric disorders. Her research focuses particularly on conditions that involve impairments in decision-making and learning, including Parkinson's disease, anterograde amnesia and anorexia nervosa.

Dr. Shohamy also has a deep interest in the humanities. She established the [Alan Kanzer Writer-in-Residence program](#), hosting authors Nicole Krauss and Claire Messud, and is passionate about making science accessible, from [advising for the animated Pixar film \*Inside Out\*](#) to participating in events like the [World Science Festival](#) and explaining the science of memory for [WIRED](#) and CNN.

Over the past few years, Dr. Shohamy has served as vice-chair of the Zuckerman Institute's Executive Committee, where she plays an active role in the Institute's academic governance and decision-making. Dr. Shohamy also took on the position of co-chair of the Hiring Priorities Committee, working with colleagues to ensure consistency in procedures and equity and transparency in practices for hiring faculty at the Zuckerman Institute.

Before coming to Columbia, Dr. Shohamy received a BA from Tel-Aviv University, earned a PhD in neuroscience from Rutgers University and trained as a postdoc at Stanford University. Her research has been recognized by numerous awards, including the McKnight Foundation's Memory and Cognitive Disorders Award, the Cognitive Neuroscience Society's Young Investigator Award, the Society for Neuroeconomics' Young Investigator Award and Columbia University's Lenfest Distinguished Faculty Award.

**Columbia University's [Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute](#) brings together a group of world-class scientists and scholars to pursue the most urgent and exciting challenge of our time: understanding the brain and mind. A deeper understanding of the brain promises to transform human health and society. From effective treatments for disorders like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, depression and autism to advances in fields as fundamental as computer science, economics, law, the arts and social policy, the potential for humanity is staggering. To learn more, visit: [zuckermaninstitute.columbia.edu](http://zuckermaninstitute.columbia.edu).**