PHOTO: RYAN S. BRANDENBERG



Julia Kaskey, CST '26

Fifth member of family to earn Temple degree

by Jonny Hart

Julia Kaskey graduated with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry and a certificate in gender, sexuality and women's studies, becoming the fifth member of her immediate family to earn a Temple degree.

She joins her older sisters Michaela, CPH '24; Laura, FOX '22; and Amanda, FOX '18, as recent Temple graduates. Their parents, Richard, EDU '92, and Kathleen, met at Temple in 1988, and Richard would later graduate with a bachelor's degree in secondary education.

For Julia, a formative Temple moment came during the *Intro to Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies* course when her professor, Jennifer Pollitt, required students to attend the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Research Symposium.

"You just will not find a place like Temple where there are so many students involved in a program like that, and where there is such a rich culture around gender, sexuality and women's studies," Julia said.

A biochemistry major, Julia has her sights set on medical school and a future career in obstetrics and gynecology or pediatrics. She plans to apply to medical school after a gap year. In Kaskey fashion, Temple's Lewis Katz School of Medicine is at the top of her list.

"One of the foundations Katz looks for is volunteer and community-oriented applicants," Julia said. "I really appreciate that, and I would love to stay in North Philadelphia and continue serving the community here."

BE A MENTOR. Learn more and complete the Owl to Owl Mentor Program application at **cst.temple.edu/owl2owl**.



PHOTO: KELLY & MASSA

Future Forward: CST Alumni Night

The College of Science and Technology hosted an alumni night in early 2026 featuring networking opportunities, updates on the college and a panel of experts discussing the advancement in artificial intelligence.

The panel included Sanchari Biswas, CST '25, adjunct instructor at Temple; Zafeer Lambe, CST '25, a master's student in AI at the University of Pennsylvania; Stephen MacNeil, assistant professor and director of Temple's Human-Computer Interaction Lab; and Slobodan Vucetic, professor and director of Temple's Center for Hybrid Intelligence.





Cameron Kerestus, CST '26

PHOTO: RYAN S. BRANDENBERG

Taking on the world

by Izzy Lopez

Cameron Kerestus, a computer science major, says that his experiences at Temple Japan made a lasting-impression.

"I studied at Temple Japan during my sophomore and senior years. It was actually a really big deciding factor for me to come to Temple, that we have campuses abroad in Japan and Rome," explained Kerestus. "I'm from a small town in the middle of nowhere. Coming to Temple in Philadelphia was a pretty big change. Going to Tokyo and living there for two semesters was even bigger. Through this experience, I learned that the world is a whole lot bigger than I thought and I'm so grateful for the experience."

Kerestus chose to study at Temple because it is a school in the heart of a big city with so many opportunities. "Since I was a kid, I knew I wanted to study computer science, and I learned programming at a young age," said Kerestus, who, during his sophomore year, did undergraduate research with physics professor Jeff Martoff. "He got me involved in a global research project focusing on qubit diagnostics, which was really interesting. I was also involved with the Human-Computer Interaction Lab with Assistant Professor Stephen MacNeil."

During the summer after his junior year, Kerestus interned with Walmart Global Tech and was placed on the payment processing team. "We wrote the code that handles credit card transactions across all Walmart stores globally, which is very extensive," said Kerestus, who is now living in Arkansas and working on payment processing at Walmart. "I really enjoyed my internship there and I got a return offer."

MESSAGE FROM THE

CST Alumni Board



PHOTO: KELLY & MASSA

As an undergraduate, I did not realize how impactful the work of our alumni community was in helping me and my fellow math and science majors. I was focused on studying for exams, juggling class and work study shifts at the library and experiencing a new city that I now call home for the past 18 years. But behind the scenes, CST alumni were partnering with staff to host job fairs, raising money for scholarships and even stepping up to teach courses and give guest lectures.

There are many ways CST alumni can give back, such as through financial contributions or donating their time and expertise. A gift to the CST Alumni Endowed Scholarship Fund honors outstanding students in each department. The Steven W. Szczepanski Memorial Student Support Fund provides resources to those experiencing a financial hardship. The Owl to Owl Mentor Program offers alumni the opportunity to share with students real-world advice about careers or life after Temple. I encourage you to explore the full list of giving opportunities on our website.

Personally, I know it may be challenging to give back to the university right after you graduate. But once you start, it makes it so fulfilling. I am proud of my fellow CST alums, a nerdy bunch that is important to the success of our university, the Philadelphia region and beyond.

Stay connected to CST by following the college on social media and reading our monthly email newsletters.

Sincerely,

Anne Beeman, CST '12
CST Alumni Board President

30 UNDER 30

The 30 Under 30 program recognizes trailblazing young alumni who have demonstrated professional success in any industry, significant community involvement or a commitment to maintaining a lifelong relationship with Temple University. 30 Under 30 highlights outstanding Owls from the more than 52,000 young Temple alumni who exemplify what it means to be Temple Made.



Kate Lyons, CST '20

PHOTO: PAMELA PALMA

Sustainability superstar

As an environmental planner with the Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Kate Lyons plans on a regional level to help the nine-county Bay Area, including San Francisco and Oakland, prepare for impending environmental threats.

Lyons exercises many skill sets on the job, including conducting environmental analysis, performing geospatial analysis using geographic information systems (GIS) applications and deploying political savvy as she interfaces with community agencies. She majored in geology, minored in environmental studies and even obtained a GIS certificate. Particularly influential was work with Professor Emeritus Laura Toran, who coached her in how to research water quality and communicate findings in an accessible way.

As sustainability director for Temple Student Government, Lyons learned how to bring people together for a good cause. Also serving as a student member of the university's Sustainability Task Force, Lyons piloted a student-led compost collection program, advocated for better student access to public transit and led initiatives to address off-campus litter.

Lyons got her first job as an energy analyst for Philadelphia-area consulting company Spotts, Stevens and McCoy after meeting consultants through her work for Temple's Office of Sustainability. But her eyes drifted west, and she received a CivicSpark Fellowship and spent a year working on climate resiliency for the Bay Area Commission, where she now works full time.

"I have this visceral memory of being a kid and seeing a TV commercial talking about the future of the planet and global warming. And I asked my parents, 'Are we going to fix that?' And as I got older, I just couldn't unsee it."



Abdalaziz Sawwan, CST '23, '25

PHOTO: PAMELA PALMA

AI innovator

Every day, about 3.5 billion people, more than 40 percent of the world's population, access tech giant Meta's social media platforms. As a research scientist at the company, Abdalaziz Sawwan helps design and evaluate changes to the personalization systems behind products like Instagram and Facebook while also searching for innovations within the company's technological infrastructure.

Working out of Meta's headquarters in California, Sawwan focuses on how artificial intelligence (AI) systems perform in the real world. That means improving efficiency across a global fleet of data centers so that features ship smoothly and systems stay stable under massive demand. He spends a lot of time comparing alternatives and pressure-testing them at scale.

"We're living through an AI moment where the pace is incredibly steep," said Sawwan, who earned a master's in computer science and a doctorate in computer and information sciences at CST. "The models being deployed today can do things that weren't at all possible even a few months ago."

For his PhD, Sawwan focused on research across several areas, including wireless sensor networks and game theory, before narrowing his work to theoretical AI. During the program, he co-authored 17 papers. He was recognized as both an Outstanding Teaching Assistant and Outstanding Research Assistant.

While at CST, Meta invited him to a multistage interview process. He landed the internship and spent the summer running large-scale experiments and evaluating algorithm changes impacting millions of Instagram users. Meta extended a full-time offer for him to join after graduation.

Animating science for CST

As the main animator for the College of Science and Technology's FunScienceToons series, Nick Santangelo makes engaging cartoons explaining important and necessary concepts for students in elementary and middle school science.

Growing up, Santangelo was a self-described "nerd" who loved *Star Wars*, Nintendo games and Pixar films, and dreamed of one day creating such imaginative worlds himself. After starting at community college, Santangelo transferred to Temple to pursue animation, attracted by the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts' Los Angeles Study Away program, which places students in the heart of Hollywood for a full semester.

Santangelo made the most of his time in the City of Angels, cold-calling experienced freelance animator and YouTuber Sir Wade Neistadt, who took him under his wing. Santangelo interned for Neistadt, learning from the Animation Collaborative and Vancouver Film School to make animation education from Pixar, DreamWorks and ILM animators more accessible to the general public.

As a professional animator, Santangelo now has reached millions of viewers through the FunScienceToons series, which also counts nearly 200,000 subscribers on YouTube, rarefied air for the platform.

Nick Santangelo, TFM '19



PHOTO: RYAN S. BRANDENBERG