Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

Dear Colleagues:

The fall semester is almost upon us and this is sure to be an academic year unlike any we’ve experienced.

I admire your patience and professionalism as we navigate the unprecedented circumstances that COVID-19 has thrust upon us. Following UF’s guidance, we’ve been slowly and thoughtfully ramping up our research activities. This only works if we’re all on the same page, and I want to thank everyone for making this transition as smooth and as safe as possible: our administrative teams, investigators, maintenance staff, students, technicians, managers … everyone involved with the MBI and neuro research at UF. COVID-19 will continue to present new challenges and we’ll keep working together to overcome them. I encourage you to stay informed and explore resources like the UF Research and UF Health Screen, Test & Protect websites. As you’ll see in this newsletter, our neuro research teams are still hard at work and we applaud their efforts.

As we enter the new academic year, we also recognize that we must do better to fight racism and promote diversity and inclusion. This responsibility goes beyond the university and the academic health system — it's up to all of us. Our Education and Outreach Committee, led by MBI Deputy Director Dr. Jada Lewis, is committed to expanding opportunities for up-and-coming scientists from all backgrounds and we will continue to enhance these efforts.

Please stay safe and take good care of each other this fall. We look forward to seeing all of you soon.

COVID-19 NEWS

MBI researchers return to labs following sudden halt for COVID-19

An increased number of investigators are permitted to return to the lab following the COVID-19 shutdown.

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Impact of COVID-19, social isolation on cognitive, mental health of seniors

How COVID-19 and social isolation are affecting the cognitive and mental well-being of older adults is the subject of a new study by UF neuroscientists.

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Managing return-to-work anxiety during COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has abruptly changed our day-to-day routines. As some of our everyday activities resume, such as returning to work, many of us may face increased levels of anxiety.

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Managing DBS devices during COVID-19

In a Neurology Today article, Dr. Michael Okun offers recommendations for managing DBS devices during COVID-19.

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Guidelines for noninvasive brain stimulation during COVID-19

Dr. Adam Woods co-authored an article offering COVID-19 response and guidelines for noninvasive brain stimulation.

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He survived a heart transplant, a kidney transplant and COVID-19
Read a story by MBI science writer Michelle Koidin Jaffee about Trent Porter, a UF Health patient who overcame a heart transplant, a kidney transplant and COVID-19.

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**MBI deputy director earns Alzheimer's Association award**

Dr. Steven DeKosky was honored with the Henry Wisniewski Lifetime Achievement Award.

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**UF neurologists create a new image of Parkinson disease**

New, more diverse image better represents who is affected by Parkinson disease, and how.

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**UF-led Alzheimer’s research consortium awarded $15 million**

New grant will enable 1Florida ADRC to continue its work with a bolstered focus on advancing understanding of dementias in diverse populations.

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**Study shows diabetes drug improves symptoms in subtype of ALS in mice**

Research led by Drs. Laura Ranum and Tao Zu is encouraging for future treatments for a type of ALS and several other neurological diseases.
Neurosurgery team treats 5,000th patient with UF-invented radiosurgery system

Invention of UF radiosurgical system transformed treatments for some of the most complex neurological conditions.

Doctoral student training program in movement disorders research receives renewal

The program trains doctoral students to become independent researchers in Parkinson's disease, dystonia, tremor and ataxia.

Using electronic health records to look for new Alzheimer's treatments through drug repurposing

Drs. Michael Jaffee and Glenn Smith are co-PIs on a UF Research Opportunity Seed Fund Award.

MBI members named UF Research Foundation Professors for 2020
Drs. Angelos Bampoutis and Brian Hoh were recognized by the UFRF for their research record and agenda.

UF neuroscientists identify mechanism, potential treatment target for manganese overexposure

Study describes how impairment of dopamine transmission caused by manganese toxicity could potentially be blocked.

UF named coordinating center for national drug abuse surveillance system

Drs. Linda Cottler and Sara Jo Nixon are members of UF’s coordinating center team to lead national efforts to identify emerging drug abuse trends.

Investigators earn Michael J. Fox Foundation award

Dr. Valerie Joers will lead study seeking to identify novel approaches to treat Parkinson’s disease.

Should neurologists be concerned with REM sleep quantity?

In JAMA Neurology, Dr. Michael Jaffee and colleagues discuss REM sleep’s potential impact on general health.
Cognitive aging T32 receives grant renewal

The program trains doctoral students to explore treatments to prevent or slow cognitive aging, mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer’s disease.

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Specific brain network may be key to successful aging, study suggests

Cingulo-opercular network in the brain could be target for novel interventions to maintain cognitive function in seniors.

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Brain cancer expert elected to Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine of Florida

Dr. Duane Mitchell recognized for improving the lives of those battling brain tumors.

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UF neurologist, international experts publish recommendations for Parkinson’s care

New articles offer insight into the importance of multidisciplinary care teams and a patient-centered approach.

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DBS study offers insights into root cause of dysmetria in essential tremor patients

UF neuroscientists uncover a way using neurostimulation to determine whether dysmetria is from tremor or dysfunction of the cerebellum in essential tremor patients.

UF neurologist, communication scientist co-lead study to improve delivery of dementia diagnoses

Dr. Melissa Armstrong and Dr. Carma Bylund have received a $375,000 state grant to examine how people experience the delivery of a dementia diagnosis.

Highlight your work with MBI’s Research Snapshots

Showcase your recent discoveries by pairing an impactful image from work in your lab — often associated with a newly published manuscript — with a brief description of what the image represents and how it has influenced your field of study.
Drs. Garrett Smith & Thomas C. Foster discuss their new study demonstrating an example of the brain’s ability to shift and use different neural circuits to perform a task in order to compensate for brain aging.

Read the Snapshot »

Drs. Adam J. Woods & Joseph Gullett provide an overview of their new study suggesting that white matter “free water,” or fluid unconstrained by brain tissue, could play an important role in the cognitive aging process. Read the Snapshot »

READ MORE SNAPSHOTS AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN »

MBI researchers in the spotlight

Journals regularly reach out to our MBI members for their expertise on many subjects. If a reporter contacts you, please alert assistant director of communications Todd Taylor, science writer Michelle Koidin Jaffee or UF Health media relations coordinator Ken Garcia so we can assist with, archive and promote your media endeavors. Here are recent examples of MBI researchers in the news:

Dr. Laura Ranum (KYW Newsradio) — Diabetes drug may be effective against a type of ALS

Dr. Michael Okun (The New York Times) — The link between Parkinson’s disease and toxic chemicals

Dr. Malú Tansey (Nature Podcast) — UF neuroscientist discusses return to the lab for Nature Podcast

SEE MORE EXAMPLES OF MBI RESEARCHERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT»

THE CONVERSATION

Put your work on the national stage

Check out these recent Conversation pieces written by MBI members:

Drs. Steven DeKosky & Todd Golde — The importance of blood tests for Alzheimer’s: 2 neuroscientists explain the recent findings

Dr. Laura Ranum — ALS scientific breakthrough: Diabetes drug metformin shows promise in mouse study for a common type of ALS

More than 100 UF faculty members have contributed to this online magazine, and it’s a great opportunity to highlight your work. The Conversation reaches 5 million-plus unique readers monthly and then the articles go farther, often picked up by major outlets such as The Washington Post, Scientific American, Smithsonian Magazine and the Chicago Tribune.

Contact science writer Michelle Koidin Jaffee or assistant director of communications Todd Taylor with your ideas for The Conversation.

Read new online version of The POST
A widow and her late husband both donated kidneys to the same man, 16 years apart. Read Terri and Jeff’s story and other exciting news from around UF Health in this month’s online edition of The POST.

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Reminders from the Communications Team

Please become an MBI member (if you haven’t already), make sure you have a professional headshot, update your UF Health Directory profile and let our communications team know early and often when you have big news or research coming out of your area. All of these efforts will help us shine an even brighter light on neuro research at UF.

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