

THE BRAINSTORM

The McKnight Brain Institute of the University of Florida e-newsletter

Issue 21, Summer 2021

Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

Dear Colleagues:

Summer is almost here and as we return to some sense of normalcy — more students on campus, labs bustling with activity, visits with friends and family — I'd be remiss not to thank each of you for the role you're playing in combating this pandemic. Whether you care for patients, contribute to COVID-19 research, teach in new ways, serve as a volunteer or encourage others to get vaccinated ... you make a difference.



In this newsletter, you'll see examples of this, including trainees who authored a review on COVID-19 therapeutics, an executive committee member who lent his expertise for an mRNA vaccine animation, a pair of neuroscientists who donated their time at a vaccination event and a group of students who found ways to keep Brain Awareness Week outreach efforts going.

For more info about how to get vaccinated or anything else COVID-related, visit our new [resources page](#).

I hope you have a great summer and find time to step away and catch up with friends and family. Stay safe, be well and thanks for all you do to advance neuroscience and neuromedicine research at UF!



UF neuroscience students engage public schoolchildren during Brain Awareness Week

Student volunteers from the local SfN Chapter participated in virtual outreach events.

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McKnight Brain Institute
BEHIND THE SCENES



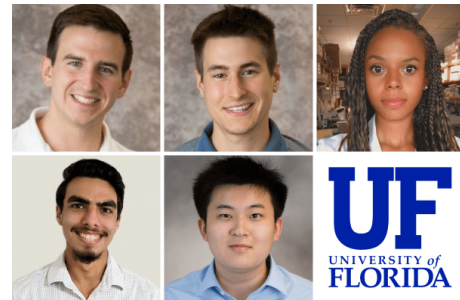
Now highlighting:
Felecia Milton

UF Evelyn F. & William L. McKnight Brain Institute UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Precision therapeutic targets for COVID-19

Neuroscience and neurosurgery graduate students emphasize need for targeted antiviral drugs to combat COVID-19 in a review in *Virology Journal*.

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Fixel Institute director earns UF research award

Dr. Michael Okun earns 2021 UF College of Medicine Clinical Science Research Award.

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Optimally Positioned

Brain cancer expert Dr. Duane Mitchell is committed to elevating UF's Clinical & Translational Science Institute in his role as director.

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Chronic pain may contribute to brain matter loss

Researchers led a study linking chronic knee pain and key demographic factors to differences in areas of the brain tied to memory.

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AI tool to be tested for improved Parkinson's diagnosis

Researchers launch study to aid in quick and accurate early Parkinson's diagnosis versus two related but distinct disorders.

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UF BREATHE Center members honored at 2021 APS Meeting

Several UF Breathing Research and Therapeutics Center and MBI members earned awards at the 2021 American Physiological Society Experimental Biology Meeting!

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Steve's journey: From stroke to recovery

Learn how members of the UF Health Comprehensive Stroke Center team helped an Alachua County sheriff recover after suffering a stroke.

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What is an mRNA vaccine?

Brain cancer researcher Dr. Elias Sayour lent his expertise on mRNA vaccines' role to prevent COVID-19 infection for a UF Health-produced animation.

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How overhauling patient records can curb physician burnout

Dr. Lisa Merlo co-authored a study offering recommendations to help prevent physician burnout.

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UF leads DBS Think Tank

Experts at the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases at UF Health hosted the 8th annual Deep Brain Stimulation Think Tank.

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Obesity's role in cardiovascular disease and stroke

Dr. Alexis Simpkins co-authored a commentary analyzing a study linking body fat to cardiovascular disease and stroke risk.

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Latest on Parkinson's treatment, research published in The Lancet

Dr. Michael Okun co-authored a wide-ranging review of Parkinson's disease.

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Toffler Scholar Spotlight: Adithya Gopinath

Learn about the research and experiences of Adithya Gopinath, who earned Toffler Scholar Research and Leadership awards in 2020.

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Silent hypoxaemia in COVID-19 patients

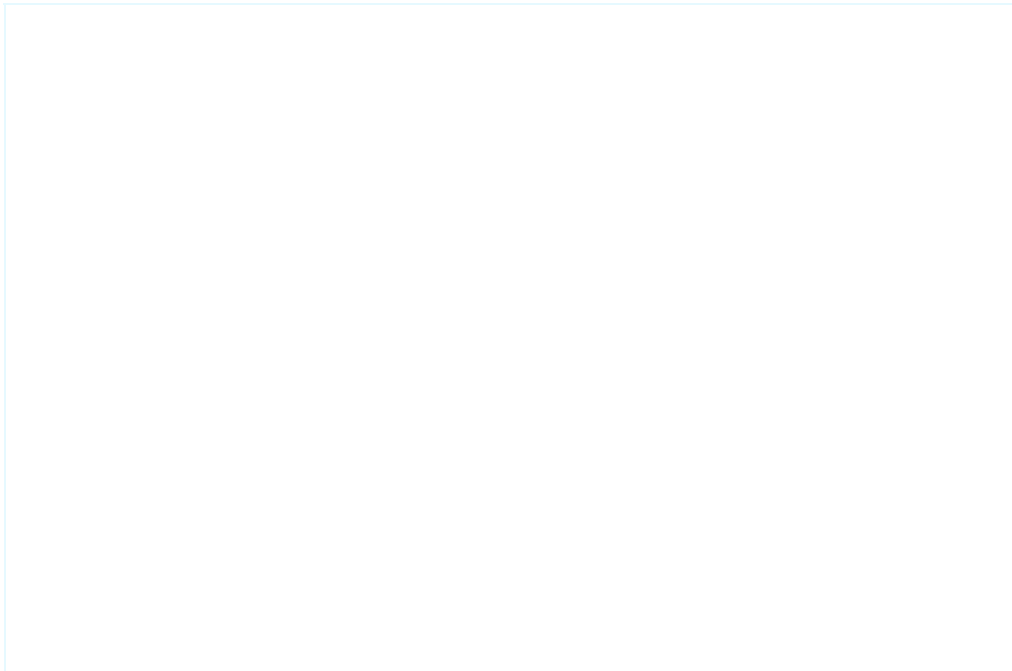
BREATHE Center director Dr. Gordon Mitchell co-authored a review selected as Editor's Choice in The Journal of Physiology.

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Psychology researchers aim to improve Alzheimer's navigation impairment

MBI members chart a new course for our understanding of age-related navigation problems.

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For the Gator Good

Neuroscientists Dr. Christopher Janus and M.D.-Ph.D. candidate Zachary Krumm were among the volunteers assisting with COVID-19 vaccination efforts at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on April 28. A special thanks to Dr. Janus, Zak and everyone involved for their efforts!

MBI researchers in the spotlight

Journalists 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. Ludmila De Faria (The Washington Post) — [It might be a panic attack. Here's what to do.](#)

Dr. Joshua Wong (BuzzFeed News) — [Why am I sp bad at typign](#)

Dr. Michael Jaffee (Ocala Style Magazine) — [Sleep saboteurs](#)

Dr. Steven Munger (USA Today) — [Why loss of smell from COVID-19 is a threat to quality of life](#)

[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:

Dr. Chris Robinson — [Prolonged brain dysfunction in COVID-19 survivors](#)

Drs. Steven DeKosky and Michael Jaffee — [Dementia patients are at greater risk for COVID-19](#)

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.

Highlight your work with MBI's Research Snapshots

Showcase your new discoveries by pairing an impactful image from work in your lab — and often associated with a newly published paper — with a brief description of what the image represents and how it has influenced your field of study.

Drs. Robert Eisinger and Aysegul Gunduz provide insight on their new research showing that brain activity associated with reward processing takes place in two parts of the basil ganglia. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

Drs. Malú Tansey and Madelyn Houser provide insight into how a variety of factors might be linked to the development of Parkinson's disease. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

[READ MORE SNAPSHOTS AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN »](#)

Latest online version of The POST


Cover story for *The POST*, the newsletter for UF Health:

When the COVID-19 pandemic exploded across the globe, everything changed. One year later, we're all adjusting to the new normal. Workers from across UF Health share the lessons they've learned during this trying time. See their stories and other important news from UF Health in the spring 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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