Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

Dear Colleagues:

Happy New Year and I hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe during the pandemic. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to your research and the flexibility you've shown during these uncertain times.

The end of 2020 brought some much needed hope with the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines. I encourage you to get vaccinated to protect your family, friends, patients, colleagues and neighbors. While we'll continue to adhere to masking, distancing and hand-washing guidelines for quite some time, the vaccine provides us a light at the end of the tunnel and hope that we can return to some semblance of normal in the near future.

Meanwhile, as we continue to pursue our robust research endeavors, please join me in welcoming Dr. Kevin McNaught, our new chief science officer for neuroscience research. He'll help us focus our efforts to formulate and execute an ambitious strategic plan for neuroscience and neuromedicine research at UF Health. Learn more about Dr. McNaught below.

Stay healthy, be safe and have a great spring semester!

Dr. Kevin McNaught named chief science officer for neuroscience research at UF Health

In this new role, Dr. Kevin McNaught will help execute a strategic plan for neuroscience research at UF Health.

READ MORE »

MBI Rising Star: Aprinda Indahlastari

Dr. Aprinda Indahlastari is the latest to be featured in MBI Rising Stars, a video series highlighting up-and-coming neuroscience researchers at UF.

READ MORE »
Smell tests evaluated as potential tool to identify COVID-19

UF neuroscientists and collaborators at Penn State and Arizona State will evaluate smell tests aimed at identifying COVID-19.

READ MORE »

AMA Journal of Ethics: Understanding brain death

Dr. Katharina Busl explains that though misleading media reports on brain death are common, understanding how it differs from traditional circulatory death is important.

READ MORE »

Study tests effectiveness of high-intensity exercise in slowing Parkinson’s symptoms

The clinical trial is testing if high-intensity treadmill exercise is effective in decreasing signs of Parkinson’s.

READ MORE »

Study examines how brain structure and brain function impact aging

Researchers examined 133 healthy older adults who underwent an MRI and performed a working memory task during their scan.
Animated cartoons developed to educate families about OCD

Researchers and animation company team up to create cartoon videos for kids with anxiety and/or OCD.

Reforming the process for DBS and neurological device approval in rare diseases

Dr. Michael Okun co-authored a JAMA Viewpoint article.

MBI researcher to serve as assistant dean of diversity & health equity

Dr. Jose Abisambra was appointed to a new role within the UF College of Medicine.

Study describes the functional effects of rare mutations in familial Parkinson’s disease

Study in the journal Brain co-authored by Dr. Matthew Farrer describes the functional effects of rare mutations in familial Parkinson’s disease.
Experimental drug may prolong survival in ALS patients

Trial drug combination shows potential to prolong survival of ALS patients by more than six months.

University of Florida Research Foundation Professor profile: Dr. Brian Hoh

“Being a surgeon-scientist is a huge privilege that not many of us have to take care of patients day to day, but also to try to study and investigate innovative ways to approach these problems,” Hoh said.

Toffler Trust Scholar Spotlight: Dr. Latoya Allen

Learn about the research and experiences of Dr. Latoya Allen, who earned a Toffler Leadership Award.

AAAS Member Spotlight: Dr. Steven Munger
Dr. Steven Munger explains how the COVID-19 pandemic created an unexpected pivot for his research.

READ MORE »

Dystonia Mini-Moonshot Grant winners

Eight investigators earned internal UF grants for dystonia research.

READ MORE »

2020 MBI Education & Outreach award recipients

Congratulations to the 2020 McKnight Brain Institute Education & Outreach award recipients.

READ MORE »

Feb. 2: Neurology Grand Rounds screening of Spark

Faculty, staff and students are invited to a virtual screening of "SPARK: Robin Williams and his battle with Lewy body dementia," a 45-minute educational adaptation of the film "Robin’s Wish," offered through the Lewy Body Dementia Association, followed by a Q&A with Dr. Melissa Armstrong. Stay tuned for email communications with the Zoom link and password. For questions, please email Kelly Martin: kelly.martin@neurology.ufl.edu.

Feb. 19: 11th Annual NCF SfN Virtual Conference

This year’s conference offers a chance to exchange scientific discoveries, network and present to fellow neuroscientists across the North Central Florida region. The event will include a poster session with awards; a post-doc and junior faculty data blitz; and a lecture from keynote speaker Dr. Steven Maier,
director of the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Registration for abstracts and applications for short presentations closes on Feb. 8.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER »

Feb. 20: ReMission Summit — register today

The ReMission Summit is a workshop for leading brain tumor researchers and clinicians, industry innovators, and government neuro-oncology experts.

LEARN MORE »

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. Malú Tansey (The Wall Street Journal) — The science behind how the coronavirus affects the brain

Dr. Kenneth Heilman (CNN) — Loneliness can help grow parts of the brain tied to imagination, study finds

Drs. Marcelo Febo & Juan Nino (WCJB 20 ABC) — UF awarded $1 million for AI research, project to detect early signs of Alzheimer’s underway

Dr. Brian Hoh (Elvis Duran Show) — Froggy’s Brain Surgeon Answers All Of Our Aneurysm Questions

SEE MORE EXAMPLES OF MBI RESEARCHERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT»
Put your work on the national stage

Check out these recent Conversation pieces written by MBI members:

**Dr. Carol Matthews** — Hoarding, stockpiling, panic buying: What’s normal behavior in an abnormal time?

**Dr. Michael Jaffee** — Why sleep experts say it’s time to ditch daylight saving time

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.*

**Dr. Paramita Chakrabarty and Tosha Williams** investigated whether accumulations of tau and alpha synuclein can interact to accelerate the appearance of “mixed pathologies” in mouse models. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

**Drs. Yona Levites and Marshall Goodwin** discuss their new study lending insights into factors that could help predict the efficacy of gene therapies using a genetically engineered antibody to target abnormal tau proteins. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

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

---

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.