Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

Dear Colleagues:

The fall semester begins in just a few weeks, and our vibrant campus will be bustling with activity in a way that we haven't seen since early 2020.

While we welcome this return to normalcy, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in light of the delta variant and the fact that not all of our family members, friends and colleagues are vaccinated. For anyone who hasn't received a COVID-19 vaccination and wants one, click here to see a list of upcoming vaccination opportunities. In addition to any clinical spaces on our campus, we ask that you please continue to wear masks on the ground floor of the MBI, where we often have clinical trial participants passing through.

I hope you all have a wonderful fall semester and enjoy this edition of The Brainstorm, which highlights some of the great work being done by our amazing faculty and staff members across campus.

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UF Women of Neuro: Dr. Jennifer Bizon

We’re highlighting women leading our neuro research efforts at UF. We begin with Dr. Jennifer Bizon, chair of the UF department of neuroscience and co-director of UF’s center for cognitive aging and memory. Her research is focused on understanding brain aging and its implications for cognitive function.

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UF neuroscientists discover biomarker with potential to aid Parkinson’s diagnosis

Findings lay groundwork for development of a blood test that could be used to help diagnose, treat Parkinson’s disease.

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Fixel Institute launches neurotechnology lab

New laboratory aims to develop best brain stimulation techniques.

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Researchers use AI to optimize treatment aimed at preventing dementia

Using AI technology, UF researchers will determine precision dosing for a new treatment designed to prevent dementia in older adults.

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UF addiction expert selected for international video series on alcohol use disorder

Dr. Sara Jo Nixon provides the latest research into long-term effects of alcohol use disorder on neurocognition.

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Parkinson’s outreach to African American community to expand

A UF team has earned a Parkinson’s Foundation grant focused on outreach efforts to the African American community in Alachua County.

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Black Voices in Research series launches second episode
Black Voices in Research, a storytelling event, highlighted the experiences and stories of individuals within the UF biomedical research community.

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**DBS settings may be successfully managed at home after surgery**

New research shows that people receiving deep brain stimulation for the treatment of Parkinson's disease may be managed successfully at home by a home health nurse.

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**UF neuroscientists, collaborators sequence American lobster genome**

The American lobster genome reveals insights into longevity and suggests a deep link between neural and immune systems.

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**UF dysphagia expert earns national award for mentorship**

Dr. Emily Plowman honored with 2021 NINDS Landis Award for Outstanding Mentorship.

**READ MORE »**
Mental confusion, disorientation may be early warning sign of severe COVID-19

Findings could help physicians identify who is at risk of developing severe COVID-19 so treatment can begin earlier.

UF Health first in U.S. to implant new DBS system

Technologically advanced deep brain stimulation system is designed to more precisely target motor symptoms of Parkinson’s disease and two other movement disorders.

Researcher earns diversity supplement for research into dementia with Lewy bodies grant

Dr. Joshua Brown received a National Institute on Aging diversity grant supplement based on his disadvantaged socioeconomic background. He will collaborate with Dr. Melissa Armstrong.

V Foundation renews support for UF brain tumor research

Dr. Duane Mitchell earned additional research support at 16th annual Dick Vitale Gala.

UF joins Preventing Alzheimer’s with Cognitive Training study

UF is a study site for a five-year, $44.4 million National Institute on Aging grant for the Preventing Alzheimer’s with Cognitive Training study.
Behind the Scenes: Kevin Hanson

It takes a village to keep the MBI research community running smoothly. We’re highlighting some of the key staff members driving our efforts.

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Neurocritical Care team earns patient safety award

A project led by MBI members addresses the urgency of acting quickly in a neurological emergency.

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MBI Rising Stars: Benjamin Kidd

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

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UF Athletic Association physician earns Michael L. Slive Award

Dr. Jay Clugston was recognized by the Southeastern Conference for outstanding service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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New research sheds light on possible cognitive symptoms of Parkinson’s

People with Parkinson’s disease could have different cognitive symptoms or none at all.

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Researchers evaluate sepsis warning assessment for neurocritically ill patients

An observational study of 7,286 patients led by UF Health researchers was published in the journal Critical Care Explorations.

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CTRND co-director a plenary speaker at 2021 AAIC

Dr. Malú Tansey will discuss therapeutic approaches targeting innate immunity in Alzheimer’s disease.

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Save the Date: Sept. 27-30
Southeastern Neurodegenerative Disease Conference

Co-organized by Drs. Jada Lewis and Malú Tansey, this hybrid conference aims to build a network of collaboration among early career dementia researchers, scientists and students who work on Alzheimer’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, frontotemporal dementias, Huntington’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, stroke, traumatic brain injury and other neurodegenerative disorders.

SENDCon, held virtually and in-person, will provide substantial opportunities for early career dementia researchers to give both oral and poster presentations alongside their senior colleagues, with the goal of cross-recruitment across participating institutions.

Click here to learn more and register.

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:

Drs. Ruogu Fang & Adam Woods (WCJB TV20) — UF researchers using artificial intelligence to develop treatment to prevent dementia

Dr. Michael Okun (Very Well Mind) — Benefits of deep drain stimulation for Parkinson's last at least 15 years, study shows

Dr. Steven Munger & Jeb Justice (Gainesville Sun) — Curious about the loss of smell after COVID-19? UF can help.

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. Chris Robinson** — *Prolonged brain dysfunction in COVID-19 survivors*

**Drs. Steven DeKosky & 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.

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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. Min Lin and Phillip Mackie** demonstrate novel insight into the development of Parkinson’s disease in their stem cell study. Read the Snapshot »

**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 »

READ MORE SNAPSHOTS AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN »

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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.