Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

Dear Colleagues:

It's hard to believe, but it's been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic reached our shores and changed our lives in so many ways.

You've all responded to this challenging situation by making the changes and sacrifices necessary to stay safe, keep your research efforts moving forward and support others. To see how we've united as a health system and as a campus to combat COVID-19, visit reflections.coronavirus.UFHealth.org, which includes an interactive timeline, videos, stories, photos and more.

We still have work to do in the fight against COVID-19, and if you haven't been vaccinated yet, I encourage you to do so as soon as you get the chance. If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccine, check out this collection of vaccine Q&A videos featuring some of our top experts across campus.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Jennifer Bizon on her new role as chair of the UF Department of Neuroscience. In addition to her many accomplishments within the department, she's been instrumental in advancing the efforts of the MBI's Education & Outreach Committee, which is dedicated to making us a more diverse and inclusive research community. Read more about Dr. Bizon's appointment below.

Thank you for reading our newsletter and thanks to each and every one of you for the role you play in advancing neuroscience and neuromedicine research at UF Health.

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Dr. Jennifer Bizon named chair of UF Department of Neuroscience

Leading cognitive aging expert has served as interim chair since April 2020.

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MBI Rising Stars: Ariel Walker

Ariel Walker is the latest to be featured in MBI Rising Stars, a video series highlighting up-and-coming neuroscience researchers at UF.
MBI community mourning the loss of Dr. Mavis Agbandje-McKenna

Dr. Agbandje-McKenna, a structural biologist whose widely recognized work led to advances in gene therapy treatments, has died at age 57.

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CTRND co-director earns J. William Langston Award

Annual award honors Dr. Malú Tansey’s contributions to The Michael J. Fox Foundation.

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A gift of fate and purpose

Learn how a new fund is propelling the ALS research of Drs. Emily Plowman and James Wymer.

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ReMission Summit for Brain Tumors goes virtual

Voices of those who’ve lost loved ones to brain cancer were prominent during this year’s UF Health-led ReMission Summit.

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Neuroscience community honors Dr. Sarah Johnson

A named annual award is being created to honor Dr. Sarah Johnson's passion for research & dedication to mentorship.

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March 17: Neuromedicine Scholars Lecture with Dr. Peter Strick

Please join the MBI from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17 for a virtual Neuromedicine Scholars Lecture with Peter L. Strick, Ph.D., distinguished professor and chair of neurobiology and co-director of the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh.

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Identifying patients with Tourette syndrome likely to benefit from DBS

Dr. Michael Okun co-authored a review in the journal Neurology detailing a screening process to identify which Tourette patients are likely to benefit from DBS.

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Parkinson’s expert joins Michael J. Fox Foundation Podcast
Dr. Melissa Armstrong discusses thinking and memory challenges for Parkinson’s patients and research advances.

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Black Voices in Research Storytelling Event

Dr. Duane Mitchell participated in an event to highlight and amplify the experiences of Black researchers and research professionals at UF.

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CAM associate director discusses cognitive aging research

Video interview with Dr. Sara Burke highlights difference between normal cognitive decline and pathological diseases.

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UF awards faculty nearly $1 million to study racial disparities

Dr. Duane Mitchell is leading a project to identify barriers to success for Black researchers in the biomedical field.

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Parkinson’s review featured on Movement Disorders cover

Genetic and environmental factors in Parkinson's converge on immune function and inflammation.

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Lewy Body Dementia Grant winners

Five investigators earn grants for pilot studies focused on Lewy body dementia.

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Spatial cognition and the hippocampus: neuroscientists weigh in

Drs. Andrew Maurer and Lynn Nadel co-authored perspective piece in the journal Trends in Cognitive Sciences.

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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. Michael Jaffee (Radio Health Journal) — The Downside of "Springing Ahead"

Dr. Steven Munger (BioSpace) — An Expert Explanation of Exactly How COVID-19 Causes Loss of Smell

Dr. Malú Tansey (Knowable Magazine) — Could the Immune System Be the Key to Alzheimer's disease?

Dr. Michael Okun (The Daily Beast) — Parkinson's Disease Needs an Operation Warp Speed

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.

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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. 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 »](#)

**Drs. Cara Croft and Todd Golde** discuss how a preclinical study shows potential to reverse pathological tau formations. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

**Drs. Michael Sunshine and David Fuller** bring attention to how electrical stimulation shows promise for restoring breathing after drug overdose, spinal cord injury in preclinical research. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

READ MORE SNAPSHOTS AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN »

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New online version of The POST

*Cover story for The POST, the newsletter for UF Health:*
For decades, University of Florida physicians have ventured into war-torn regions, conflict zones and developing countries around the world to bring lifesaving care to the most vulnerable patients. They work with their medical brethren on the ground under arduous conditions, bringing needed expertise and equipment to remote areas where disease and adverse health conditions often have the upper hand. Read their stories and learn about other exciting news from around UF Health in this month’s 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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