

# THE BRAINSTORM

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

Issue 24, Winter 2022

## Message from the Director, Dr. Todd Golde

**Dear Colleagues:**

As we usher in 2022, I want to thank you all for your perseverance over the past two years.

Aside from serving in professional roles as researchers, clinicians, teachers and mentors, you also serve in personal roles as parents, spouses, partners, caregivers and friends. Whichever of these roles apply to you, one thing is certain: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unexpected impact on all of them. Through it all — the quarantines, the surges, the variants, the work and lifestyle changes — I remain in awe of your persistent dedication to your work.

Whatever the hurdles, you consistently clear them — important papers are published, prestigious grants are obtained and accolades are earned. You continue to move the field forward to improve lives and create a better future. This newsletter offers just a small glimpse of these accomplishments.

Thanks for all you do and cheers to a happy and healthy 2022!



## CSI: Alzheimer's

Feature story in University of Florida's Explore Magazine highlights some of the promising Alzheimer's investigations underway at UF.

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## UF study shows artificial intelligence's potential to predict dementia

Researchers use AI to predict whether people with a specific type of early memory loss will go on to develop a form of dementia.

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## UF joins global study into Parkinson's onset, progression

UF is now a site for worldwide study seeking new insights into Parkinson's disease.

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## Lauren and Lee Fixel Family Foundation establish the Fixel Brain Mapping Professorship

Dr. Aysegul Gunduz was named the inaugural Fixel Brain Mapping Professor.

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## MBI Behind the Scenes with Greta Walker

We're highlighting an employee who has dedicated over 20 years to helping the MBI community.

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## MBI hosts Trainee Reindeer Games

The MBI hosted the Trainee Reindeer Games to honor the work of graduate students, postdocs and clinical fellows. Trainees competed for assorted prizes, and activities included:

- [Gingerbread house contest](#)
- [Winter lab door decorating contest](#)
- [Grinch-worthy poem](#)
- [Additional winners](#)



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## University of Florida: Women of Neuro

We are highlighting the women leading our neuro research efforts at the University of Florida. Here are some of our recent features:

- **Dr. Sara Burke**: associate director of the Center for Cognitive Aging and Memory
- **Dr. Yenisel Cruz-Almeida**: associate director of Pain Research & Intervention Center of Excellence
- **Dr. Laura Ranum**: director of the Center for NeuroGenetics



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## MBI director named BioFlorida Researcher of the Year

Dr. Todd Golde earned the inaugural award recognizing a researcher whose achievements have contributed to knowledge, innovation and public health.

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## Apps show promise to help heavy drinkers age 21-25 cut back

Dr. Sara Jo Nixon was part of a research team that showed a smartphone breathalyzer and blood-alcohol estimator reduced drinking — even though participants weren't trying to drink less.

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## Ultrasound of optic nerve linings and stroke outcomes

UF-led study linked optic nerve lining measurement with likely outcomes after stroke.

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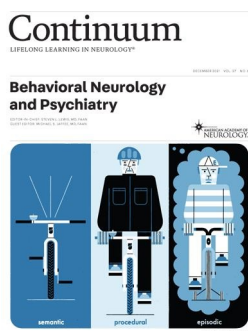
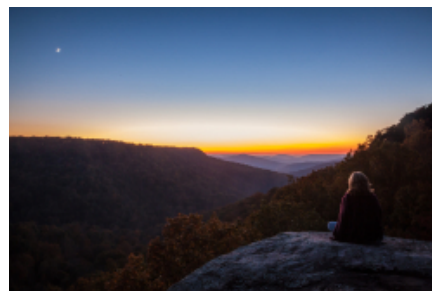


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## Meditation brings immune system activations, UF researchers find

Study by Dr. Vijayendran Chandran and colleagues found that eight days of intense meditation caused a robust activation of the immune system.

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## UF researchers headline December issue of Continuum: Lifelong Learning in Neurology

Dr. Michael Jaffee was selected as guest editor of edition focused on behavioral neurology and psychiatry. The edition includes review articles authored by UF faculty in the departments of psychiatry, neurology and clinical and health psychology.

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## UF neurologist studies use of brain wave test prior to surgery in seniors

Alzheimer's Association-funded research explores possible link between pre-surgery brain changes during sleep and subsequent cognitive complications.

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## AAN publishes new guidelines for early Parkinson's treatment

Dr. Melissa Armstrong co-authored new guidance published in the journal Neurology.

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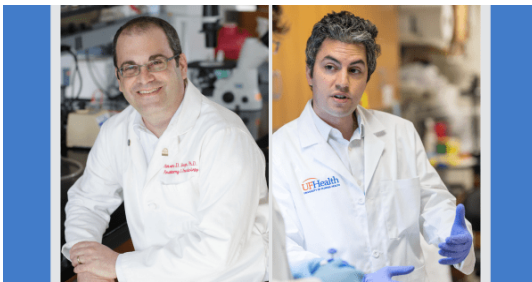
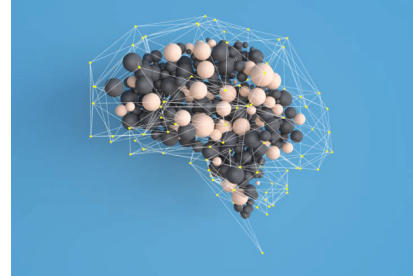


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## UF neuroscientist featured in Society for Neuroscience annual report

UF research team using AI to optimize brain stimulation was highlighted.

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## MBI members earn UF Innovate awards

Drs. Steven Munger and Elias Sayour were among those recognized for Innovations of the Year.

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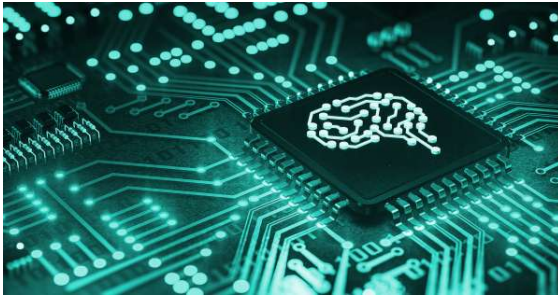
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## UF joins global Parkinson's research network

Aligning Sciences Across Parkinson's, or ASAP, accelerates research efforts into underlying causes of disease.

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## Researchers seek to build confidence in AI for health care under NSF grant

Investigators will also explore ways to use AI to diagnose neurodegenerative diseases earlier.

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## UF neurosurgeon honored by Congress of Neurological Surgeons

Dr. William Friedman was the 2021 Honored Guest at the Congress of Neurological Surgeons' annual meeting.

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## UF neurocritical care experts author guiding articles in latest issue of Continuum

Dr. Katharina Busl was guest editor for October's edition of Continuum: Lifelong Learning in Neurology.

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## Tell us about your new grant!

We want to know about grants and awards you've received for a new feature in future editions of The Brainstorm. Use our form to share information with our communications team.



**Submit a recent grant**

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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 Okun (Brain & Life Magazine)** — [How to improve gait in Parkinson's disease](#)

**Dr. Malú Gámez Tansey (New Scientist)** — [Why Alzheimer's is not a single disease](#)

**Dr. Aparna Wagle Shukla (Medscape)** — [Influenza tied to long-term risk for Parkinson's disease](#)


**Dr. Duane Mitchell (The Washington Post)** — [An unvaccinated man met a doctor at a bar. He left agreeing to get his first dose](#)

[SEE MORE EXAMPLES OF MBI RESEARCHERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT»](#)



## 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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