

THE BRAINSTORM

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

Issue 32, Fall 2023

Message from the Director, Dr. Jen Bizon

It's been an exciting summer at the MBI as we've welcomed several talented individuals into new roles here, including Dr. Gordon Mitchell as deputy director (please read the story below), Kate Casey-Sawicki as assistant director of research administration and Chris Weeks as facilities operations specialist.

This summer we celebrated the launch of Gator NeuroScholars, an innovative postdoctoral fellowship that is part of our ongoing efforts to train the next generation of impactful neuroscientists right here at UF. In June, we were honored to have UF Health leadership unveil Florida's first mobile stroke treatment unit right outside of the MBI. This new vehicle will improve stroke care and save lives!

Read all about these happenings and other exciting neuroscience and neuromedicine news from across campus in this newsletter.

Have a wonderful fall semester and thank you for being a part of the MBI community.



Dr. Gordon Mitchell named MBI deputy director

Dr. Gordon Mitchell will serve as a deputy director, alongside MBI Director Dr. Jennifer Bizon and her leadership team.

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Gator NeuroScholars program offers standout opportunities to postdocs

MBI kicks off enhanced postdoctoral fellowship with highly competitive stipend and mentorship by leading neuroscientists.

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Dr. Adam Woods named co-director of UF's CAM Center

Dr. Adam Woods to co-lead UF's Center for Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research.

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UF Health unveils Florida's first mobile stroke treatment unit

New vehicle allows a specialized stroke team to bring care to the patient.

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Long spaceflights, frequent travel take a toll on astronauts' brains, study shows

Dr. Rachael Seidler led study looking at how the human brain reacts to traveling outside Earth's gravity.

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Study finds seniors over 85 who exercise scored higher on cognitive tests

Combo of aerobic and strength-training exercises in advanced age appears to be related to better cognition, new research finds.

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Pegboard test assessing movement could aid Parkinson's research, study shows

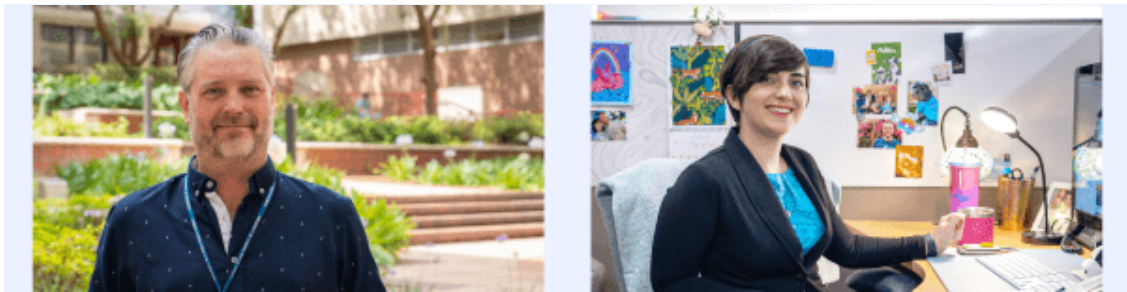
UF-Northwestern research team reports pegboard test could provide objective marker of Parkinson's motor symptom changes.

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MBI Feature Series

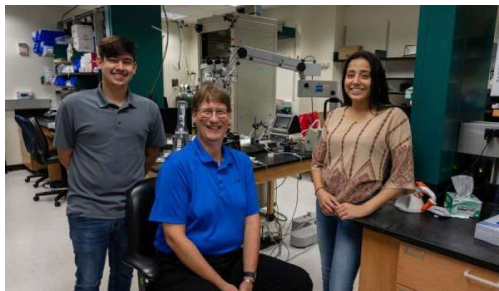
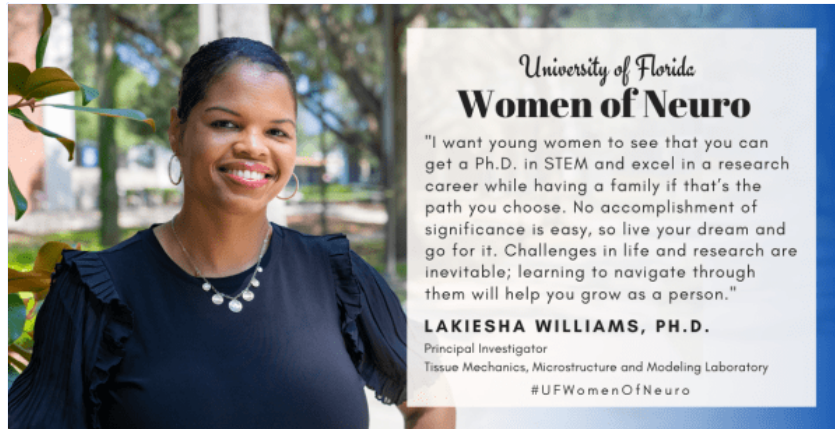
Behind the Scenes with Gabe Trinity & Jackie Hart

It takes a village to keep the MBI research community running smoothly. We're highlighting some of the key staff members driving our efforts. [READ THEIR HIGHLIGHTS»](#)



University of Florida Women of Neuro

Our UF Women of Neuro series shines light on some of the incredible women leading our neuroscience and neuromedicine research initiatives. In this issue, we're featuring Dr. [Lakiesha Williams](#), principal investigator of the Tissue Mechanics, Microstructure and Modeling Laboratory. [SEE MORE UF WOMEN OF NEURO»](#)



PHHP: Behind the scenes with Dave Fromholt

BREATHE Center lab manager featured by UF College of Public Health and Health Professions.

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UF brain cancer researcher receives NCI grant

Dr. Loic Deleyrolle will lead study aiming to optimize immunotherapy in glioblastoma.

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Neurology and neurosurgery ranked 30th by U.S. News & World Report

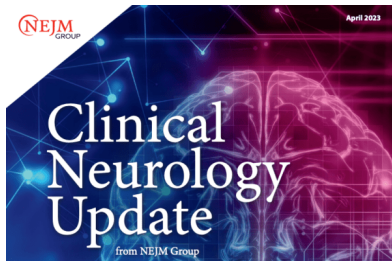
Neurology and neurosurgery among five UF Health specialties ranked among the nation's elite.

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Complex walking and brain stimulation improve function in older adults

Dr. David Clark to lead a team of investigators on grant combining complex aerobic walking exercises with non-invasive electrical brain stimulation.

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UF neurologists featured in 2023 Clinical Neurology Update

Drs. James Wymer and Michael Okun contributed to annual NEJM Group publication.

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Neurosurgery resident awarded Fulbright fellowship to improve care in West Africa

Dr. Megan Still and community leaders will conduct a needs assessment for a hospital's new neurosurgery wing.

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Doctoral student selected for Society for Neuroscience Scholar Program

Zachary Simon, a Ph.D. student in the lab of Dr. Marcelo Febo, has been accepted into the Society for Neuroscience's Scholar Program.

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Fixel Institute becomes National Ataxia Foundation Center of Excellence

Fixel Institute named Florida's first National Ataxia Foundation Center of Excellence and the 15th in the U.S.

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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](#) or science writer [Michelle Koidin Jaffee](#) so we can assist with, archive and promote your media endeavors. Here are recent examples of MBI researchers in the news:

- **Dr. Marcia Morris (Finding Genius Podcast)** — [Mental health amongst college students: Why anxiety and depression is on the rise and what to do about it](#)
- **Dr. Anna Khanna (WESH 2 News)** — [Mobile stroke treatment unit helping patients in Florida](#)
- **Dr. Irene Malaty (Neurology Today)** — [Study identifies risk factors for childhood tic disorders that persist into adulthood](#)

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

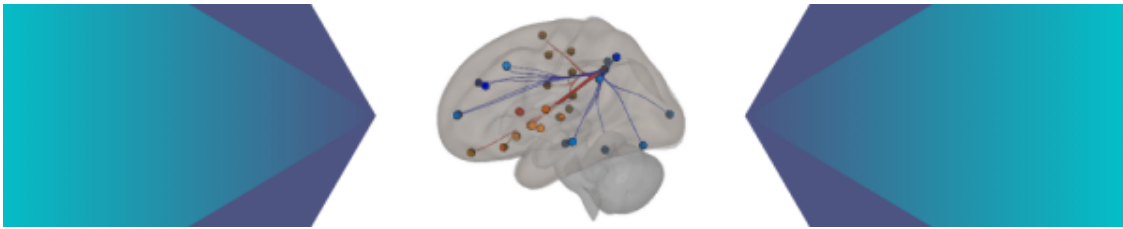
THE CONVERSATION

Check out these recent Conversation piece written by MBI members:

- **Dr. Habibeh Khoshbouei** — [Misuse of Adderall promotes stigma and mistrust for patients who need it](#)
- **Dr. John B. Williamson** — [When does clinical depression become an emergency?](#)
- **Dr. Gary Reisfield** — [Can eating poppy seeds affect drug test results?](#)

The Conversation is a nonprofit, independent news organization publishing trustworthy and informative articles written by academic experts for the general public and edited by a team of journalists. [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 discovery by pairing an impactful image from your latest published research with a written description of your findings. Share with our MBI communications team and work together to convey how this research has influenced your field of study.

Drs. Vivekananda Budamagunta & Thomas Foster reported that removal of senescent cells beginning in a middle-aged rat model and extending to old age led to reduced systemic inflammation and lessened cognitive decline. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

Elizabeth Chapman & Dr. Carol Mathews found evidence of alterations in one of the earliest stages of visual processing in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder. [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), 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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