

THE BRAINSTORM

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

Issue 30, Spring 2023

Message from the Director, Dr. Jen Bizon

Hello MBI Community,

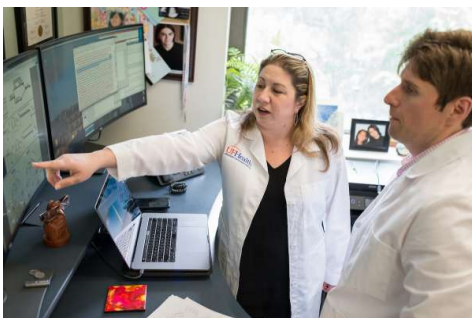
I am so impressed by the breadth and depth of the work highlighted in this newsletter, and I know this only captures a subset of the many accomplishments across our community. A huge shoutout to the NIH-funded scientists who contributed to the Top 5 Blue Ridge rankings of our neuroscience, neurology and neurosurgery departments. Such an amazing accomplishment! And congratulations to those who have received awards or new grants, or published new and impactful findings.



I'd like to recognize the members of the North Central Florida Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience, the only student-led chapter for the Society of Neuroscience in the country! The chapter recently held a fantastic daylong symposium that provided a forum for trainees from all over Central Florida to present their work. During Brain Awareness Week, these chapter members visited Alachua County schools, introducing more than 300 elementary, middle and high school students to the field of neuroscience. Our chapter is truly unique due to the many efforts of our outstanding neuroscience trainees from across the UF campus.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the MBI! I've enjoyed connecting with many of you and hearing your ideas for our upcoming "Next 25" celebration in the fall. Keep them coming! If you have an idea for ways to celebrate our anniversary or strategies to make our community even more impactful in the future, please [submit them here](#) or reach out to me directly.

Thank you for all you do to make the MBI a world-class scientific community.



Dr. Jennifer Bizon named director of UF's McKnight Brain Institute

Brain aging expert and chair of UF Department of Neuroscience takes the helm at the MBI.

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Dr. Michael Jaffee appointed chair of UF Department of Neurology

Brain injury and sleep expert and founding director of UF's Brain Injury, Rehabilitation and Neuroresilience Center to serve as neurology chair.

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Dr. Sara Burke named co-director of UF's CAM Center

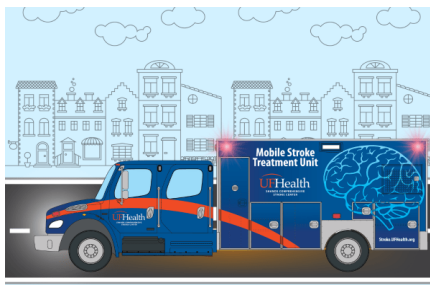
Brain aging expert to co-lead UF's Center for Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research.

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Norman Fixel Institute names chief operating officer

Tara Hearn to serve as chief operating officer, overseeing day-to-day operations at the Norman Fixel Institute.

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UF Health to launch Florida's first fleet of stroke ambulances

By deploying to the patient, stroke teams can begin treatment while in transit to the nearest available stroke center.

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Neuro departments Top 5 overall in NIH funding

Neuromedicine and neuroscience research at UF ranked Top 5 among all universities (public and private) in the 2022 rankings of NIH funding.

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Dr. Duane Mitchell honored with inaugural Louis W. Sullivan Award

American Society for Clinical Investigation award recognizes Dr. Duane Mitchell's work to develop innovative brain cancer treatments.

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Neuroscientists earn College of Medicine research awards

Drs. Coralie de Hemptinne and Barry Setlow received recognition for their research and mentorship accomplishments.

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UF Women of Neuro: Dr. Anna Khanna

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. Anna Khanna, the medical director of the UF Health Shands Comprehensive Stroke Center.

National Institute of Mental Health director delivers 2023 Luttge Lecture

Dr. Joshua A. Gordon spoke about genetics, neural circuits and computational approaches during eighth Luttge Lecture.

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UF neuroscience students bring brain lessons to area public schools

To celebrate Brain Awareness Week, UF neuroscience students brought interactive demonstrations to K-12 students.

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North Central Florida Society for Neuroscience holds annual conference

SfN conference included a 53-poster competition, a data blitz and a panel discussion on careers in science, academia and industry.

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Huntington's disease clinic renewed as HDSDA Center of Excellence

Norman Fixel Institute one of three in Florida and 56 nationwide to receive renewal.

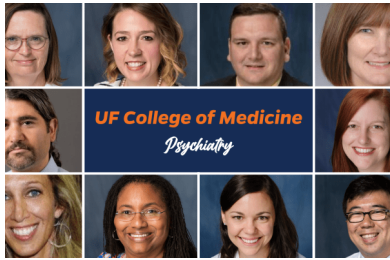
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Research team creates largest international cohort of people with Parkinson's-linked variants

Dr. Matthew Farrer contributed to the new Michael J. Fox Foundation Global Genetic PD Cohort.

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Helping people around us

Department of psychiatry builds community engagement cornerstone through growing number of outreach programs

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Faculty members in psychiatry, engineering and molecular genetics named AAAS Fellows

Drs. Czerne Reid, Carlos Rinaldi-Ramos and Maurice Swanson were among 19 UF faculty members honored.

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NIH grant expands brain-aging research opportunities

With new R25 grant, UF neuroscientists offer mentorship and research opportunities to undergraduates interested in cognitive aging and Alzheimer's disease.

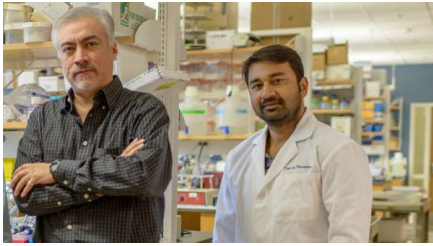
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Adoptive cellular therapy improves Parkinson's symptoms in mouse-model study

UF neuroscientists provide preclinical evidence for adoptive cellular therapy as a potential immunotherapy treatment to improve symptoms in genetic form of Parkinson's.

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Study identifies potential therapeutic target for form of ALS, FTD

UF neuroscientists collaborate on fruit fly study revealing a potential therapeutic target for ALS, FTD linked to TDP-43.

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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. Gary Reisfield (Washington Post)** — [Pentagon warns poppy seeds might cause troops to fail drug tests](#)
- **Dr. Carol Mathews (CNBC)** — [What it feels like when your mental health condition becomes a punchline](#)
- **Drs. Steven DeKosky and Glenn Smith (WUFT)** — [Medical community hopeful following FDA's accelerated approval for Alzheimer's disease treatment](#)

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

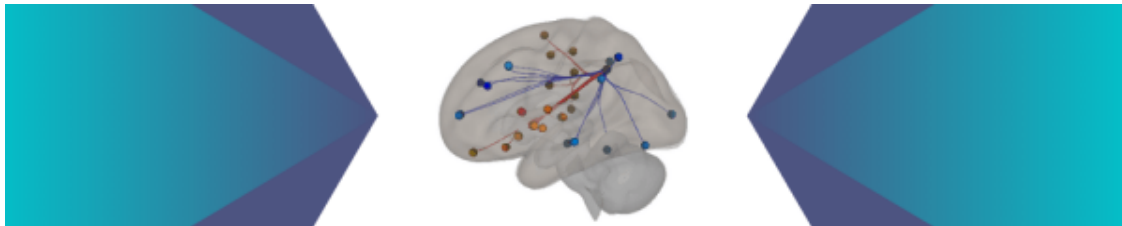
THE CONVERSATION

Check out this recent Conversation piece written by MBI members:

- **Dr. John B. Williamson** — [When does clinical depression become an emergency?](#)
- **Dr. Gary Reisfield** — [Can eating poppy seeds affect drug test results?](#)
- **Dr. Sara Burke** — [Ultraprocessed foods — like cookies, chips, frozen meals and fast food — may contribute to cognitive decline](#)

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. Joshua Wong & Leonardo Almeida show that a form of deep brain stimulation called biphasic DBS was safe and well tolerated and may provide faster improvement of symptoms in patients with primary dystonia. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

Drs. Kara Johnson and Coralie de Hemptinne found that a brain signal called evoked resonant neural activity, or ERNA, could serve as a potential marker to guide physicians administering deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's disease patients. [Read the Snapshot »](#)

Dr. Malú Gámez Tansey & Oihane Uriarte Huarte report that a novel implantable device called MARTEENI showed promise in a rat-model study to improve functionality of prosthetic devices designed to work with peripheral nerves in place of a lost limb. [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.

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