

UCLA BRI

Newsletter



Director - Dr. Gina Poe

“There has never been a better time to be a neuroscientist.”

Message from the Director

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the UCLA Brain Research Institute (BRI) quarterly newsletter! We have a decade's worth of news to convey, and wow, has the BRI grown into a busy, healthy, and productive community.

What a privilege it is to lead this historic institute, established in 1959, with over 300 faculty and well over 1000 trainees and lab personnel across 30 UCLA departments and eight schools. I proudly follow in the footsteps of John French, Carmine Clemente, Arnold Scheibel, Alan Tobin, Chris Evans, and Felix Schweizer. With today's talent and tools, there has never been a more exciting time to be a neuroscientist, and the BRI is here to help you seize the day.

I aim to enhance our public presence, sharing our bona fide expertise with a world hungry for knowledge. I also want to strengthen our community collaborations and increase our already strong education and outreach efforts. We're building new research core capabilities like grant reviewing (led by our Society For Neuroscience chapter president, Laura DeNardo, and the BRI's Associate Director for Research, Kate Wassum) and our new equipment sharing library. We are also increasing grant opportunities, boosting conference and affinity group budgets, and providing training for enhanced effective public engagement. Inside this issue, you'll find member honors, outreach highlights, and details on the new \$10M UCLA-CDU Dana Center for Neuroscience and Society. At our inaugural all-day Neuroscience retreat on October 22, 2024, at the Luskin Center (mark your calendars!), we will focus on determining the future of Neuroscience at UCLA to better tackle the mysteries of the brain and accelerate our advances in neuroscience. I look forward to seeing you!

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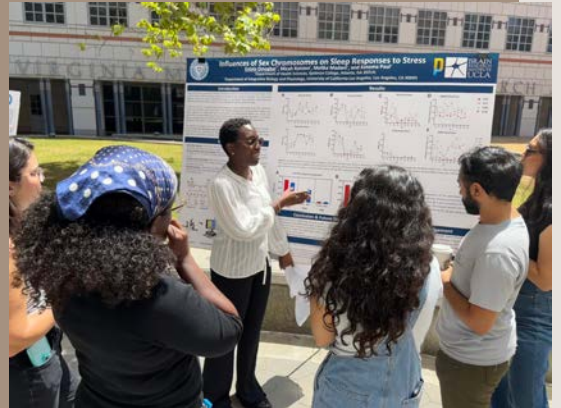
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BRI story



BRI Staff Spotlight

In this issue, we're excited to feature two of our amazing staff members who are pivotal to the success of the Brain Research Institute. Get to know their roles, passions, and unique contributions to our community. Stay tuned for future editions where we'll introduce more of our dedicated team and BRI community members. There's so much more to discover about the people behind the groundbreaking work at BRI!

PATRICIA LOWE



Patricia Lowe serves as the unofficial Historian and Chief Financial Officer of the Brain Research Institute. Her career at UCLA began in September 2001 as a Fund Manager in the Integrated Substance Abuse Programs (ISAP) of the Neuro-Psychiatric (now Semel) Institute. Five years later, she joined her former OES Director and became the BRI Business Manager. Within two years, she was promoted to CFO and has remained in that position since. In this capacity, she is responsible for all fiscal matters related to the BRI, including preparing and submitting the annual budget to the Dean's Office, overseeing and reporting on all expenditures, monitoring compliance to extramural and donor terms, depositing receipts from donors and sales and services customers, and meeting to advise PIs on finances and potential strategies.

Pat also devotes her time to directing staff and activities of various outreach projects, such as the UCOB-sponsored Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Initiative (HSI) programs. She loves traveling the world and enjoys volunteering with non-profit organizations.

JOSEPH QUINTERO

Joe Quintero serves as the Programs and Operations Manager of the Brain Research Institute. He collaborates closely with the Director and Chief Administrative Officer to supervise established programs and execute new initiatives. He has orchestrated a series of highly successful events, including workshops, poster sessions, and multi-day symposia, that have garnered significant attention.

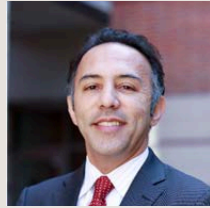


Joe's meticulous and strategic event planning has left a lasting impression on attendees, effectively showcasing the institution's and neuroscience community's efforts. Joe loves the outdoors. He enjoys running and high-intensive training.

New BRI Members



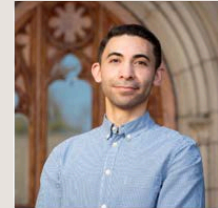
Beau Alward, Ph.D.
Integrative Biology &
Physiology



Aydin Babakhani, Ph.D.
Electrical and Computer
Engineering



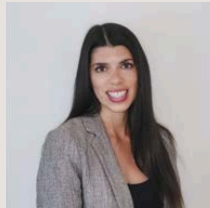
Enrico Castillo, Ph.D.
Psychiatry



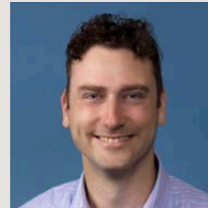
Jaime Castellon, Ph.D.
Psychology



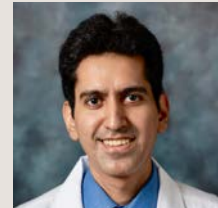
Greg Field, Ph.D.
Ophthalmology



Erica N. Grodin, Ph.D.
Psychiatry & Biobehavioral
Sciences



Gil Hoftman, M.D., Ph.D.
Psychiatry & Biobehavioral
Sciences

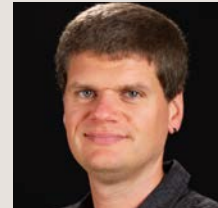


Tanuj Gulati, Ph.D.
Medicine



Sung Jae Lee, Ph.D.
Psychiatry & Biobehavioral
Sciences

Expanding our Neural Network:
Welcome to the brilliant new faculty
joining the BRI family!



Ian Krajbich, Ph.D.
Psychology



Noa Pinter-Wollman, Ph.D.
Ecology and
Evolutionary
Biology



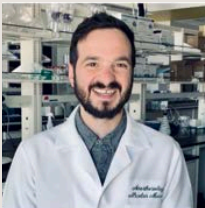
Valerie Tornini, Ph.D.
Integrative Biology &
Physiology



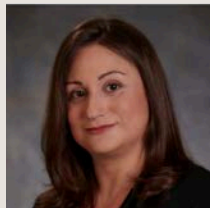
Duncan Leitch, Ph.D.
Integrative Biology &
Physiology



Stephanie Leal, Ph.D.
Integrative Biology &
Physiology



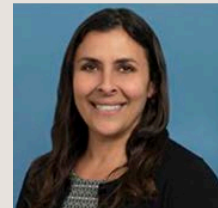
Nicolas Massaly, Ph.D.
Anesthesiology and
Perioperative
Medicine



**Elizabeth Videlock,
M.D., Ph.D.**
Medicine



Chuchu Zhang, Ph.D.
Physiology



**Kate Wolitzky-Taylor,
Ph.D.**
Psychiatry & Biobehavioral
Sciences



Are you interested
in becoming a BRI member?

Research Highlights

Let's dive into some of the pioneering research being led by the BRI community! We are thrilled to showcase three innovative studies pushing the boundaries of what we know about the brain.

Control of Feeding by a Bottom-Up Midbrain-Subthalamic Pathway

Nature Communications 15, Article 2111 (2024)



Dr. Fernando Reis Dr. Avishek Adhikari

To fulfill our needs we need to explore. If you need food, you have to investigate your environment, search for food, and pursue it once found. How does the brain coordinate this elaborate, but necessary, exploration?

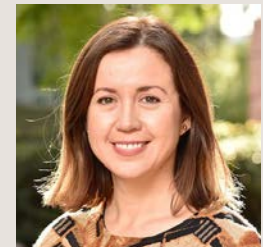
In a new study, a team of BRI members led by Dr. Fernando Reis and Dr. Avishek Adhikari, found that GABAergic neurons in the lateral and ventrolateral periaqueductal gray control exploratory food foraging and consumption. They find the periaqueductal gray is not just a final downstream target for top-down control of exploratory behavior, but it also helps coordinate foraging and feeding via bottom-up influence over higher-order feeding, exploration, and investigation of brain nodes. These brain-foraging neurons can override hunger and promote compulsive food seeking and consumption, helping us to understand brain systems that could promote compulsive overeating behaviors.

Research conducted by Dr. Megan Massa, a former UCLA neuroscience Ph.D. student and now an assistant teaching professor at Emory University, along with BRI faculty Dr. Stephanie Correa, discovered that somatostatin (SST) neurons influence food intake differently in males and females, with a significant impact during the female reproductive phase of proestrus. Interestingly, ablating these neurons decreased food intake only in females with low body mass, while fat transplantation experiments showed that increased adipose tissue could alter this effect. These findings shed light on the sophisticated ways SST neurons integrate hormonal and metabolic signals, offering a new perspective on how our bodies manage energy and reproductive health.



Feeding Neurons Integrate Metabolic and Reproductive States in Mice

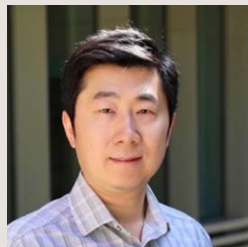
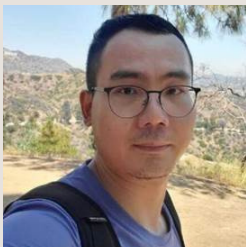
iScience Volume 26, Issue 10 (2023)



Dr. Megan Massa Dr. Stephanie Correa

Cortical Regulation of Helping Behaviour Towards Others in Pain

Nature 626, 136-144 (2024)



Dr. Mingmin Zhang Dr. Weizhe Hong

Humans and animals show kindness by taking action to help others in need. A study, conducted by BRI members Dr. Mingmin Zhang and Dr. Weizhe Hong at UCLA, advances our understanding of helping behavior and how the brain processes others' needs and regulates the decision to help others. They show that mice display helping behavior towards others in pain, and discover that a part of the mouse brain, the anterior cingulate cortex, controls this behavior by responding specifically to the pain of others.

This suggests that even mice possess sophisticated neural mechanisms for perceiving and responding to others' needs and taking action to help others, potentially shedding light on the evolutionary roots of empathy and prosocial behavior in humans.



Share your research with the community!

[Submit stories for Newsletter](#)

Undergraduate Program

Celebrating the 25th Annual Undergraduate Neuroscience Poster Session



“ We educate >700 undergraduate neuroscience majors and minors, many of whom work in our research labs, and ~90 Ph.D. students and even more postdoctoral scholars in our laboratories. ”
- Gina Poe

In May, the Undergraduate Neuroscience Interdepartmental Program (U-NSIDP) proudly hosted the 25th Annual Undergraduate Neuroscience Poster Session. Ninety students from diverse UCLA research labs and capstone programs, including student organizations Project Brainstorm and the DOPA Team, showcased their two-quarter-long research projects. These dedicated students presented their findings to an enthusiastic audience of students, faculty, and community members.



Each year, outstanding presentations are recognized with prizes, thanks to the generous support of the BRI. This year's exceptional presenters included: Austin Aldujaili, Ellie Hilgert, Jordi Martinez, Shiley David, Joshua Stepter, Keshav Patel, Eesha Chakraborty, Zara Green & Nicolette Rachel Zargari (Project Brainstorm). Congratulations to all participants for their impressive contributions to the field of neuroscience!

Commencement Celebration



On Saturday, June 15th, the U-NSIDP celebrated the hard work and achievements of 180 graduates. This year, a record number of neuroscience students graduated with honors, including departmental, college, Latin, and Phi Beta Kappa distinctions.

Student Speaker: Catarina Gerges

Catarina Gerges, a proud first-generation Egyptian American, delivered a heartfelt speech on behalf of the graduating class. Catarina completed her studies in just three years, earning a double major in neuroscience and disability studies. She is also part of the inaugural graduating class of Disability Studies Majors. During her time at UCLA, Catarina served as a resident assistant for UCLA Residential Life and was an active member of the UCLA Coptic Orthodox Christian Club.



Scheibel Scholarship Recipients

The Scheibel Scholarship, established in honor of Dr. Arnold “Arne” Scheibel, who led the UCLA BRI from 1987-1995, supports outstanding U-NSIDP majors in their 3rd and 4th years at UCLA. This scholarship provides financial aid, research experience, faculty mentoring, career workshops, and networking opportunities.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, the U-NSIDP awarded the scholarship to 12 dedicated students: Rachel, Fox; Ellie, Hilgert; Sai Anish, Kuppili; Matthew, Li; Gabrielle, Malte; Syon, Mansur; Mauricio, Maravilla; Sanjana, Somepalli; Gabby, Vilchez; Mathilda, Von Guttenberg; Stafford, Williams; Angela, Yang. To learn more, visit [Scheibel Scholarship](#)



Congratulations

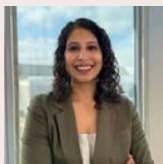
to the 2023-2024 Ph.D. Recipients



Sarah Chang, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Carrie Bearden

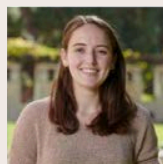
Attention in Typical Development and in the Psychosis Spectrum



Trishala Chari, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Carlos Portera-Cailliau

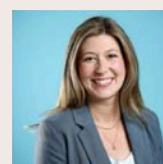
Neural Circuits Underlying Social Touch Deficits in Mouse Models of Autism Spectrum Disorders



Zoë Dobler, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Carlos Portera-Cailliau

Population Dynamics of Sensory Adaptation in Cortical Circuits



Cassandra Klune, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Laura DeNardo

Neurodevelopment, Anatomy, and Function of Prefrontal Circuits in Threat Avoidance



Marcelo Francia, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Roel Ophoff

Combining Omics Approaches to Evaluate Biomarkers for Complex Brain Disorders



Blake Madrugá, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Peyman Golshani

Innovations in Optical Microscopy Methods for Studying Neural Circuits Function *In-Vivo*



Michelle Frazer, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Gina Poe

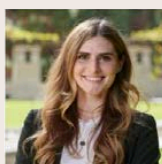
The Role of Oriens-Lacunosum Molecular Interneurons in Offline Processing of Spatial and Contextual Memory



Benjamin Liu, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Dean Buonomano

Learning and Neural Dynamics in Neocortical Microcircuits



Kelly Jameson, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Elaine Hsiao

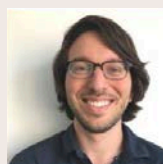
Vagal Interoception of Microbial Metabolites from the Small Intestinal Lumen



Marlesa Godoy, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Ye Zhang

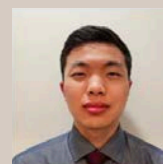
Insights into the Regulation of Neurogenesis Termination and the Secretomes of Oligodendrocytes



Chris Gabriel, Ph.D.

Mentors: Dr. Laura DeNardo & Dr. Scott Wilke

Development of Behavioral Analysis Tools for the Assessment of Threat Avoidance Learning in mPFC



Charltien Long, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Sotiris Masmanidis

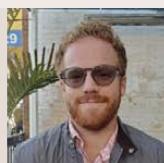
Physiological Constraints on the Rapid Dopaminergic Modulation of Striatal Reward Activity



Charles Schleifer, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Carrie Bearden

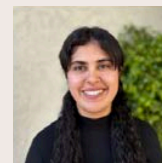
Mapping Brain Development with Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Clinical and Genetic Neuropsychiatric Risk Syndromes



Gil Torten, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. David Williams

Actin Mechanisms in Retinal Pigment Epithelium Trophocytosis and the Consequences of Retinal Detachment on Rod Synaptic Ultrastructure



Katherine Espinoza, Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Lindsay De Biase

Microglial Mitochondria: Defining the Landscape and Testing Links Between Organelle Remodeling and Microglial Function

Honors & Awards

We are also thrilled to highlight the outstanding accomplishments of the below BRI faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate students. Their dedication to advancing brain research has earned them numerous awards, fellowships, and honors. They embody the innovation and excellence of our program.

Join us in celebrating these individuals for their well-deserved recognition!



Dr. Kate Wolitzky-Taylor
Associate Professor
Department of Psychiatry
and Biobehavioral Sciences

Appointed as the Joanne
and George Miller & Family
Endowed Chair



**Dr. Juan Luis Romero
Sosa**
Postdoctoral Scholar
Mentor: Dr. Alicia
Izquierdo

Selected for 32nd
Annual Samuel Eiduson
Student Lecture Award
(Scheduled for
10.08.2024)



Melis Cakar
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Shulamite Green

Won 1st place at UCLA's Grad
Slam competition and
competed in the California-
wide Grad Slam event

Received an NIH R36
Dissertation Grant



Adrian Escobar
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Lindsey
De Biase

Awarded
BRI Knaub Fellowship
in
Multiple Sclerosis
Research



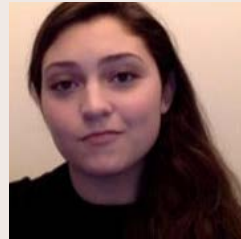
Caitlin Goodpaster
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Laura DeNardo

Awarded
NRSA F31 fellowship



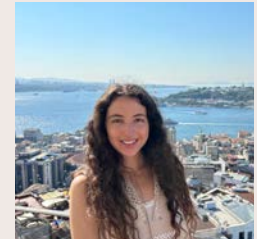
Yesica Mercado-Ayon
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Samantha
Butler

Awarded
Eva Kavan Prize for
Excellence in Research
on the Brain



Victoria Turnbull
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Rhonda
Voskuhl

Awarded
BRI Knaub Fellowship in
Multiple Sclerosis
Research



Bar Yosef
Graduate Student
Mentor: Dr. Katy Cross

Awarded
NSF Graduate
Research Fellowship
Program (GRFP)



Share your accomplishments!
[Submit stories for Newsletter](#)

Funding Opportunities

The UCLA-CDU Dana Center for Neuroscience and Society!



In April 2024, the Dana Foundation launched the new UCLA-CDU Dana Center Initiative for Neuroscience and Society. This initiative connects a diverse group of experts—from community organizations and South LA residents to neuroscientists and humanities professionals—fostering collaboration and idea exchange. Read more about this exciting initiative here [UCD-CNS](#).

There are several upcoming funding opportunities offered by this center, including a fellowship program (due August 20, 2024). For more details, contact Sabrina Amani, Dana Center Administrative Director, at samani@mednet.ucla.edu.

UCLA Research Enhancement



The UCLA Research Enhancement Office (REO) within ORCA fosters research and creative activities at UCLA. Stay updated on funding opportunities, limited submissions, and events by signing up for the weekly REO newsletter. Visit [UCLA's Research Enhancement Office](#)

Predoc & Postdoc Application for T32 Training Program



Predoc and postdoc trainee applications for the Training Program in [Neurobehavioral Genetics](#), directed by Drs. Roel Ophoff and Carrie Bearden, will be accepted until August 30, 2024, 5 PM (PT).

NIH Funding Opportunities



Explore a variety of NIH funding opportunities available for Ph.D. students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty members. Click here for more information: [NIH funding](#)

Federal Funding opportunities



Alzheimer's Clinical Trials Consortium (ACTC) Clinical Trials
[R01 Clinical Trial Required \(RFA-AG-25-010\)](#)

Early- and Late-Stage Clinical Trials for the Spectrum of Alzheimer's Disease /Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias and Age-Related Cognitive Decline
[R01 Clinical Trial Optional \(RFA-AG-25-011\)](#)



Brain-Behavior Quantification and Synchronization Transformative and Integrative Models of Behavior at the Organismal Level
[U01 Clinical Trial Optional \(RFA-DA-24-040\)](#)



Brain-Behavior Quantification and Synchronization Transformative and Integrative Models of Behavior at the Organismal Level
[U01 Clinical Trials Not Allowed \(RFA-DA-24-041\)](#)



Functional Target Validation for Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias
[R61/R33 Clinical Trial Not Allowed \(RFA-NS-25-011\)](#)



GPB Bioscience Fellowship Incentive Program



The Bioscience Fellowship Incentive Program encourages students to apply for fellowships like the NIH NRSA and NSF GRF, offering an annual stipend augmentation from the Graduate Programs in the Bioscience department. Click here for more information: [GPB Fellowship Program](#)

BRI/Semel SfN Travel Awards



SfN Travel award applications for currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and assistant researchers are due August 23, 2024. For details email Joe Quintero at jmquintero@mednet.ucla.edu

Campus to Community

At UCLA, our commitment to neuroscience extends far beyond our labs and classrooms. Through our diverse outreach programs, we're not just sharing the wonders of the brain—we're cultivating the next generation of scientists, thinkers, and innovators. Read more about the incredible impact of our outreach initiatives below. Each program represents a step towards a more inclusive, diverse, and vibrant future for neuroscience.

Brain Awareness Week



Every March, UCLA's campus buzzes with excitement for Brain Awareness Week (BAW), an annual event that welcomes hundreds of K-12 students from low-opportunity schools. BAW 2024 (March 11-15), led by Gabriel Rojas-Bowe (NSIDP graduate student) and Vidya Saravanapandian (Postdoctoral Scholar), and supported by the BRI team and >60 volunteers, brought UCLA's cutting-edge neuroscience research to 245 students from various LAUSD schools.



Left: Middle school students marvel at the intricacies of brain structures. Right: Brain art made with the vibrant handprints of 5-year-olds from University Parents Nursery School. List of BAW 2024 schools: Cowan Avenue Elementary, Magnolia Science Academy, Milken Community School, Sunny Brae Elementary School, Peary Middle School, and University Parents Nursery School



Elementary school students learning about electrophysiology as a tool to learn brain disorders (left) and about the importance of gut health for brain function (right).



Middle school students learning how we use flies to understand the role of sleep (top) and how we use virtual reality to understand learning and memory (bottom).

Through interactive and engaging hands-on activities and lab tours, students not only learned about the brain but were inspired to pursue higher education in science. BAW's success was driven by the dedication of our volunteers, including BRI staff, faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate and undergraduate students. Their passion created an atmosphere of enthusiasm and curiosity. Visit the BRI-BAW page to learn more about BAW and to watch the BAW 2024 video.

“A significant milestone this year was the inclusion of LAUSD students from the Intensive Diagnostic Education Centers (IDEC) program, making their first-ever field trip even more special. The collaborative spirit of our volunteers ensured these students had a rewarding and educational visit”, says Dr. Saravanapandian. “The smiles, questions, and enthusiasm from all participants made this year’s BAW an unforgettable experience, filling us with hope for the future of neuroscience and the bright young minds it inspires.”



InterAxon

The undergraduate student outreach organization, InterAxon, conducts collaborative events each quarter and visits several K-12 schools to teach about the brain.



This Spring quarter, they presented "Drugs and the Brain" to a captivated middle school audience, and "Sports and the Brain" to a group of younger learners, thus showcasing InterAxon's diverse educational outreach. To learn more and join this group of fun and enthusiastic undergraduates, visit Interaxon.

The DOPA (Drug Outreach and Prevention Awareness) team is a unique ensemble of senior and graduate neuroscience students from UCLA. They are trained to provide accurate, engaging, and age-appropriate information about both legal and illegal substances to high school students, focusing on grades 9 to 12. Their educational outreach primarily targets traditionally underserved schools, aiming to inspire interest in careers in addiction and mental health research and inform students about the risks associated with drug use.

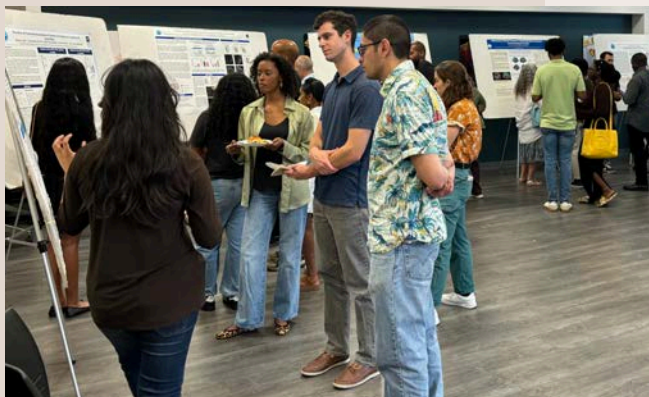
On June 3rd, 2024, the DOPA team engaged students from University High School with enlightening lectures that both educate and motivate young minds to consider careers in vital areas of public health. DOPA co-director, Dr. Rafael Romero, says, "This visit exemplifies our commitment to making a real difference in the community by empowering the next generation with essential knowledge and inspiring choices."

The DOPA Team



Students (from left to right): Malia Belnap (Grad Student, Course TA), Reva Bajjuri, Anthony Li, Reza Fasih Ramandi, Maxx Dettle, Quitze Gastelum, Isabel Prado-Torres, Yasmith Farnan, Jayleen Bell, Noe Cazares, Bella Zucco, Gabriela Vilchez, Harshi Kellempalli, Ella Whitehouse, Alex Romero. Instructors at the bottom: Dr. Christopher Evans and Dr. Rafael Romero

CELL Scholars



The CELL Scholars program, founded by Megan Chappell (Neuroscience Ph.D. student), is dedicated to enhancing diversity and inclusion in STEM. It provides high school students from underrepresented backgrounds with paid research positions in UCLA laboratories. Under the guidance of graduate student mentors, these scholars develop technical and coding skills and receive career and college guidance from experts in the field.



On June 22nd, 2024, the CELL Scholars presented their innovative neuroscience research projects at Boyer Hall, UCLA, showcasing sophisticated understanding and promising contributions to the field of science.

“Their journey continues to inspire and pave the way for the next generation of scientists,” says Megan. To learn more and join this group of fun and enthusiastic undergraduates, visit [Cell Scholars](#).



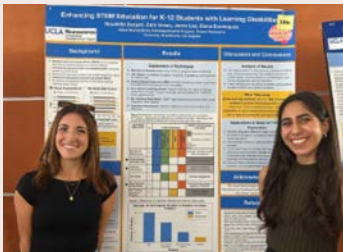
Project Brainstorm

[Project Brainstorm](#) brings neuroscience to life for K-12 students across Los Angeles. Composed of graduate and undergraduate neuroscience students, the team delivers dynamic, hands-on lessons on brain structure and function directly in classrooms, igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for science among young learners.

Recently, two notable accomplishments have highlighted the program's impact:



1. Poster Award Success at 2024 Neuroscience Poster Day: Zara Green and Nicolette Zargari, received top honors for their research on active learning strategies for students with disabilities. Additionally, six out of eleven students graduated from Project Brainstorm, highlighting the program's ongoing excellence.
2. Interactive Learning at John F. Kennedy (JFK) Medical Magnet School: Neuroscience majors from UCLA visited JFK Medical Magnet School to deliver a hands-on learning experience about brain function and structure. The session was organized into five interactive stations, each offering a unique insight into the neurological sciences:

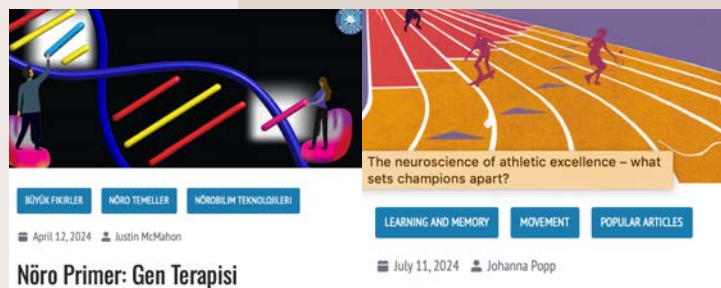


Dr. Elena Dominguez, NSIDP lecturer and current director of Project Brainstorm says, “These activities not only provided JFK students with a deeper understanding of neuroscience but also showcased the practical implications of studying the human brain. Through touching real brains and learning about iconic neurological cases, students gained a comprehensive insight into the complexities and wonders of neuroscience.”

[Knowing Neurons](#): UCLA-born, globally grown! This award-winning neuroscience education and outreach website, founded by grad students in 2012, offers brain-buzzing content for all. From policy to pop culture, it's your go-to neuroscience hub, breaking language barriers with their Spanish, German, and now a new Turkish webpage!

Explore www.knowingneurons.com to learn more.

Knowing Neurons





Celebrating Diversity in Neuroscience: 2024 BRI Undergraduate Summer Research Programs

This summer, UCLA's campus has been a hub of neuroscience innovation and diversity, hosting a total of 14 talented undergraduate students (Adrian Sedillo, Camilla Connor, Christina Nguyen, Cori Zuvia, Eduardo Figueroa, Eniola Omogbai, Faith Rosas, Favour Badewole, Gabriel Thomas, Kimberly Guerrero Leon, Mikayla Duke, Morgan Myles, Princess Ngwu, Raegan Logue), visiting from across 10 institutions.

These students participated through three interconnected programs: the UCLA-HBCU Neuroscience Pathways Program, directed by Dr. Hakeem Lawal, the Brain Research Institute Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (BRI-SURE), directed by Dr. Ketema Paul, and the Superior Opportunities for Maximizing Access to Neuroscience (SOMA) program, directed by Dr. Alicia Izquierdo. Read more about the programs: [BRI Undergraduate Summer Research Programs](#). They have spent the past 8 weeks immersed in intensive research experiences, working alongside top UCLA neuroscientists in various labs. Projects ranged from studying neural circuits in model organisms to analyzing complex human brain imaging data. The energy and diverse perspectives these students bring to the UCLA research labs are truly transformative.



The culmination of these programs was celebrated with a poster presentation on August 8th, 2024, in the Gonda Neuroscience Research Building courtyard. This event offered a unique opportunity for the UCLA community to engage with these brilliant students.



Participating student home institutions: CSU Long Beach, Spelman College, UC Riverside, University of Maryland – College Park, Cal Poly Pomona, Fisk University, Delaware State University, CSU San Bernardino, Tennessee State University, and Rust College.

These summer programs continue to be cornerstones of UCLA's commitment to fostering diversity in STEM. As we celebrate this year's successes, we're excited about the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas these students will bring to the field of neuroscience.

Are you inspired to join our outreach initiatives and make a difference?

Visit [BRI outreach](#) to learn more about our programs and how you can get involved in shaping the future of neuroscience education and diversity!



Guess the Baby Neuroscientist!

Calling all neuroscience detectives! Can you crack our Baby Brain Trust riddle?

Tiny faces, big brains - match our neuroscientists' baby pics using clues below about their neural specialties. It's time to play "Guess Who: Neuroscience Edition"!



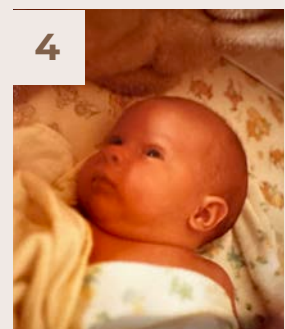
Fear and panic explorer



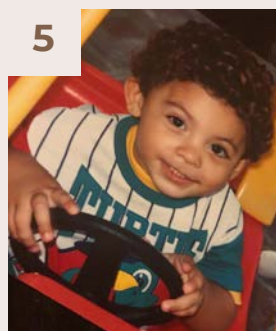
Neurosurgery innovator



Cracking the code of memory



Dementia-fighting brain defender



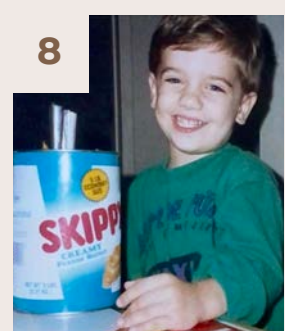
Decision-making guru



Hormone-brain balance expert



Stroke recovery wizard



Brain events and website whiz



Teen brain detective



Pain and addiction buster



Master of brain clocks

- Dr. Steven Cramer
- Dr. Christopher Colwell
- Dr. Cathy Cahill
- Dr. Carrie Bearden
- Dr. Ausaf Bari
- Dr. Stephanie Correa

- Dr. Jaime Castellon
- Dr. Alcino Silva
- Dr. Jessica Rexach
- Aaron Michner
- Dr. Avishek Adhikari

Think you've got it? Check your genius status at [Key to Quiz](#) or scan



Be Part of the BRI Story



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Looking for a scientific forum to exchange ideas?
Explore [BRI Affinity groups](#)



Science workshop opportunities for Highschoolers
Knowing Neurons and CELL Scholars need volunteers for workshops at University High School. Contact [Bar Yosef](#) by August 15, 2024
baryos@g.ucla.edu



Your voice matters! Submit your ideas here and contribute to the BRI vision
[BRI vision board](#)



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