



McKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Preserving memory, enhancing life

February 15, 2022

Tom Brannan
Vice President for Development and Alumni
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
AB 1264 1720 2nd Ave. S
Birmingham, AL 35294-0112

Dear Mr. Brannan,

At the February 9, 2022, meeting of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF), the trustees reviewed the 2021 annual report submitted by the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute (MBI) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The report provided a favorable representation of the MBI and its many new and continuing projects. The trustees appreciated the submission of supplemental information requested in advance of the formal review.

The trustees were pleased to note that research and programmatic activities have continued despite the influences of the COVID pandemic. The publication of "A Primary Care Agenda for Brain Health" leading to the development of the Brain Health Advocacy Mission leading is a significant achievement. The development of the brain health team in collaboration with the School of Nursing and Family Practice clinics show great promise in promoting brain health as a life-time achievable goal.

The trustees were also pleased to note the collaborations with other investigators in research initiatives throughout the UAB as well as between research scientists at the other MBIs. Specifically, the research programs related to treatment of asymptomatic carotid disease and the analysis predicting the occurrence of hospital-based disability provide important information on the influences on cognitive aging and age-related cognitive decline.

It was pleasing to the trustees to note the continued productivity of Dr. Kristina Visscher in completing the study funded by the NIA providing important information on cognitive training and having the potential of tremendous public health benefit. The receipt of the new grant from the NIA by Dr. Farah Lubin to continue her epigenetic research and her leadership in promoting diversity of future investigators in science are outstanding achievements as well.

The report mentions the hiring of several new faculty. The trustees appreciate the continued growth of the UAB MBI, but observed the intended roles of the new faculty were not discussed. The trustees would appreciate receiving additional information regarding how the new faculty will be integrated and may contribute to the success of the MBI.

The plans for redesign of the "Memory Disorders Clinic" by Dr. David Gelmacher, occupant of the Warren Family Endowed Chair in Neurology, was mentioned in the 2020 annual report. However, the update requested was not in the 2021 annual report and the trustees ask that it be forwarded to be included with the 2021 Annual Report.

In addition, please forward the previously requested comprehensive description of the research activities under the direction of Dr. Lahti and Dr. Junghee Lee, occupants of the Geropsychiatry Chair and the Kinney Endowed Chair in Geriatric Psychiatry respectively, which was to have been included in the 2021 Annual Report. It is also noted that Dr. Lee is not listed in Appendix 1 of the 2021 Annual Report.

It is noted that the match of the endowment by UAB has now been completed with the gift of \$1.5 million to establish the Protective Life Endowed Chair in Healthy Aging. Further information regarding how this new endowment will be managed and integrated under the auspices of the MBI at UAB will be appreciated. Additionally, it is noted the Jarman F. Lowder Endowed Professorship in Neuroscience is vacant. What are the plans for recruitment to fill the professorship in support of research in neuroscience within the framework of the MBI?

The trustees send their collective appreciation to you for your efforts in continuing to advance the research initiatives of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation leading to the understanding and alleviation of age-related cognitive decline and memory loss.

Sincerely,

Amy Porter, Executive Director

cc: Dr. Ronald M. Lazar
Dr. Selwyn M. Vickers

Dr. Ray L. Watt
Ms. Melanie A. Armstrong

Dr. Erik D. Roberson
MBRF Trustees

Dr. David G. Standaert

Please address all correspondence to:

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*Established by
Evelyn F. McKnight
to Alleviate Memory Loss
in the Aging*

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Dear Amy,

Thank you once again for the follow-up letter from the meeting of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF). Dr. Lazar has provided detailed information for the trustees' questions below.

Intended roles of new faculty members:

The McKnight Brain Institute at UAB (MBI) is excited to welcome the following faculty members:

- Pamela G. Bowen, PhD, CRNP, FNP-BC, BBA: The clinical director of the Brain Health Advocacy Mission (BHAM), a new UAB initiative for the promotion of brain health into primary care.
- Victory A. Del Bene, PhD: A co-investigator on the recently funded study to examine age-related memory and cognitive decline among UAB physicians.
- Kristine L. Lokken, PhD: A member of the Advisory Board for the Brain Health Advocacy Mission, with a specialization on the effects of stress and depression as they relate to brain health.
- Pariya Fazeli Wheeler, PhD: An expert in the acceleration in aging among people living with HIV disease and those suffering from the long-term effects of COVID-19. She is also studying age-related cognitive decline among those suffering from health disparities.

Redesign of the "Memory Disorders Clinic":

The Memory Disorders Clinic, along with the MBI, Neuropsychology, and the Alzheimer's Disease Center, will be moving to a newly renovated space encompassing the fifth floor of the Callahan Eye Hospital Building. This new space will include administrative offices, research laboratories, testing rooms, patient exam rooms, and a large waiting area. The proposed floor plan is attached for your information.

Research activities under the direction of Dr. Adrienne Lahti and Dr. Junghee Lee:

Dr. Lee's work involves the study of social cognition, which describes cognitive processes related to the perception, understanding, and implementation of linguistic, auditory, visual, and physical cues that communicate emotional and interpersonal information. Thus, her work seeks to investigate aspects of cognitive function that complement its intellectual components. One example of a pilot intervention project funded by the MBRF under the leadership of Dr. Levin at the Miami MBI that addresses these issues is susceptibility to influence in older individuals. In addition, a 2022 publication addressed these matters from the perspective of racial differences between middle-aged black and white Americans. Dr. Lahti, who no longer holds the Kinney Chair since she became Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, is a world expert in multimodal imaging involving resting-state connectivity and networks involving excitatory and inhibitory neurotransmitters in human models. Her work provides novel analytic approaches for better understanding the results of imaging in older individuals, including those in the M project. In addition, Dr. Lahti recently published an important paper, entitled 'Mental, Physical and Social Functioning in Independently Living Senior House Residents and Community-Dwelling Older Adults,' which has definite relevance to the MBI mission. The search for Dr. Lahti's successor to the Kinney Chair is near completion, and an offer is forthcoming.

OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT

Information regarding how the new Protective Life Endowed Chair in Human Aging will be managed and integrated under the auspices of the McKnight Brain Institute at UAB:

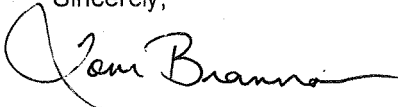
On March 21, 2021, UAB announced that this Chair will provide UAB's Department of Biology with resources to build upon UAB's goal of establishing Birmingham as a global leader for healthy aging research. Dr. Steven N. Austad, a longtime faculty member of the MBI and a Distinguished Professor and Chair of the UAB Department of Biology, became the recipient of the Protective Life Endowed Chair. Until approximately 10 years ago, there was a funded registry for normal aging among individuals living in the Metro Birmingham region, which was enriched for African-American participants to reflect the diversity of this region. When the PI left for another institution, this registry lost its leadership and funding. In a collaboration between Drs. Austad and Lazar, this registry will be revived and revitalized, and it will serve as a research infrastructure for studies of age-related memory and cognitive decline. In addition, Dr. Austad serves in an advisory capacity to the recently established Brain Health Advocacy Mission, led by Dr. Lazar, to put a brain health agenda into primary care.

Recruitment plans for the Jarman F. Lowder Endowed Professorship in Neuroscience:

The Jarman F. Lowder Endowed Professorship in Neuroscience is currently vacant after Dr. Lori McMahon departed UAB after 22 years of outstanding service. The Department of Neurology is on the verge of launching a search for the next holder of the distinguished professorship to further the mission and vision of the Department and its research opportunities. We will update the MBRF as soon as a new holder is announced.

If you or any of the trustees would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. We remain grateful for your work and to the entire Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Research Foundation for its continuing partnership and engagement with the faculty and researchers in the McKnight Brain Institute at UAB.

Sincerely,



Tom Brannan
Vice President for Advancement

Attachment