



McKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Preserving memory, enhancing life

March 6, 2024

Tatjana Rundek, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Neurology | Evelyn F. McKnight Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging

Director, Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute

University of Miami

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

Dear Dr. Rundek,

At the February 20, 2024, meeting of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF), the trustees reviewed the 2023 annual report submitted by the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute (EMBI) of the University of Miami. The report is a comprehensive overview of the collaborative work, productivity, and impressive scientific accomplishments of the EMBI in 2023.

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The trustees appreciate the very thoughtful tribute to and recognition of the many contributions of Dr. Ralph Sacco. Carrying on his legacy, significant leadership transitions have taken place this year that pave the way for an exciting next chapter for the EMBI, with the appointment of two Associate Directors, Drs. Levin and Haq, both leaders in their respective fields. We commend Dr. Sun for her excellent service in her role as Education Director and wish her success in her new role as the Director of the Brain Endowment Bank. The trustees also look forward to Dr. Agudelo's growth as the new Education Director. Dr. Rundek's roles spanning different research initiatives and collaborations, her personal productivity – with 47 peer-reviewed published papers – and commitment to mentoring trainees are remarkable and applauded by the Trustees.

The trustees are pleased to learn of the high level of collaboration across the EMBI's expanded leadership team through the creation of an EMBI Executive Committee that is meeting biweekly to discuss progress and metrics for achieving the 5-year strategic goals and identify continued opportunities for training programs, grants, and collaborations.

The trustees were impressed by the high level of productivity of the MBI overall, with 25 new research grants listed in the report, including six focused on training. The trustees commend the extensive outreach being done to bring information on healthy brain aging to diverse communities through programs such as "Age Like a Pro," reaching 250 participants this year, and the Brain Health Conference.

The trustees noted the tremendous depth and breadth of mentorship and training opportunities for early career clinicians and scientists, with several Mentorship Awards bestowed upon several EMBI leaders, including Drs. Rundek, Levin, and Ramos. Highlights of this include the new award to support the UM Clinical Translational Science Institute (CTSI) K12 program and the 1FL ADRC AlzSTARS (Alzheimer's Disease Science Training to Advance Research Success) program, which now has 10 trainees. Another strong example is the launch of the new 2-week cognitive neurology rotation program for neurology residents, in partnership with the UM Cognitive Division.

As a follow-up to this letter, the trustees request that the EMBI team please share any recordings, handouts, or resources that have been developed for the purpose of community outreach and education. The MBRF would like to possibly share these on our online brain health resource hub (in development), crediting the University of Miami EMBI, of course.

The trustees send their appreciation to you for the tremendous efforts in advancing the mission of the MBRF to increase our understanding and alleviation of age-related cognitive decline and memory loss.

Sincerely,

Angelika Schlanger

Angelika Schlanger, PhD | Executive Director | MBRF

CC: Dean Henri Ford, MD, MHA; Bonnie Levin, PhD; Ihtsham Haq, MD; Susan Fox-Rosellini, MBA; Stacy Merritt, MA, CCRP; MBRF Trustees

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