



McKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Preserving memory, enhancing life

March 10, 2024

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

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

Dear Dr. Rundek,

At the February 24, 2025, meeting of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF), the trustees reviewed the 2024 annual report submitted by the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute (EMBI) of the University of Miami (UM). The report is an attractive and well-organized comprehensive summary and describes many research initiatives and collaborations as well as the many scientific and educational achievements of the EMBI's activity.

The trustees are pleased to note the new and highly qualified leadership of the EMBI that has been established following the death of Dr. Sacco. The trustees look forward to continuing to work with you as the director of the EMBI as well as Dr. Levin and Dr. Haq as Associate Directors. It is also noted Dr. Agudelo has replaced Dr. Sun as the education director and Dr. Sun is now director of the Brain Endowment Bank. The appointment of Dr. Galvin to the Schoeninger Endowed Chair in Memory Disorders as well as Director of the Comprehensive Center for Brain Health (CCBH) provides a strong leadership infrastructure to advance the comprehensive programs in cognitive aging and memory at the UM EMBI.

The trustees applaud the news of the appointment of Dr. Jose Romano as the Chair of the Neurology Department after serving as acting chair and interim chair of the department following Dr. Ralph Sacco's death in 2023. Dr. Romano, a renowned clinical neurologist who is a long-time friend and advocate of the MBRF, has been a highly respected faculty member at the UM Miller School of Medicine for over 25 years.

Other leadership changes in the School of Medicine were noted with the appointment of Dr. Guillermo Prado as Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Mr. Joe Echevarria as the new President and CEO of UM Health

Under Dr. Rundek's leadership, the continued implementation of the 5-year strategic plan scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025 appears to be effective in the efforts to consolidate the cognitive clinical and translational research in all divisions in the Department of Neurology under the EMBI umbrella.

The trustees commend the EMBI on the receipt of 24 new grants in 2024 and 20 special awards for scientific merit and achievement. The report highlights the importance of the two large NIA U19 Programs. In addition, the report reflected the continued robust productivity of the team of seven faculty and 43 staff members under Dr. Galvin's leadership in efforts to innovate and lead brain health and aging research with a particular focus on minoritized populations.

It is impressive that the Annual Report describes collaboration of over 100 clinical and translational scientists in the Collaborative Integrative Translational Trans-Disciplinary Institute (CITTI). The EMBI reflects affiliation with 15 programs located in centers or divisions in the School of Medicine.

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Melanie Cianciotto ♦ SunTrust Bank ♦ Post Office Box 620005 ♦ Orlando, Florida 32862 ♦ 407--237-4485

Dr. Rundek
March 6, 2025

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The trustees were pleased to observe the partnership of the EMBI in the PAN (Precision Aging Network), the NIA U19 project at the University of Arizona MBI.

With appreciation the trustees recognize Dr. Levin's continued leadership and valued participation in the McKnight Brain Aging Registry (MBAR) Inter-Institutional Research Program designed to evaluate the cognition and memory of individuals older than 85 years of age. The registry now contains over 500 participants followed in the UM cognitive neurology clinics and the data contained in the Registry can be accessed by each of the research scientists at each of the MBIs and external investigators. It is noted that in addition to her many other contributions to the success of the strategic plan for the EMBI, Dr. Levin leads the Neuropsychology Post-doctoral Fellowship Program with six faculty, four post-doctoral Fellows, seven upper-level graduate PhD practicum students, and two volunteer undergraduate assistants.

The trustees commend the establishment of the new compulsory cognitive neurology program as a core requirement for all neurology residents. Under Dr. Agudelo's leadership, twelve students participated in the one-year program which received favorable reviews, and one resident electing to pursue a career in cognitive neurology.

The trustees observed a considerable amount of research effort at the EMBI is devoted to Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. The trustees understand this research is important and contributes to scientific knowledge. However, the purpose of the MBRF is to support research in age related cognitive decline and memory loss differentiated from all other neurodegenerative disease. It is hoped this effort is not sublimated or diluted while other research efforts are pursued.

The trustees are excited and are looking forward to attending the 16th Inter-institutional Meeting hosted by the EMBI on May 14-16, 2025, while remembering the remarkably successful meeting hosted by the UM EMBI held virtually due to the pandemic.

The trustees express their collective appreciation for your support and efforts in continuing to advance the research initiatives supported by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation, leading to preserving memory and enhancing life through brain health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amy Porter".

Amy Porter
Interim Executive Director

CC: Dean Henri Ford, MD, MHA; Bonnie Levin, PhD; Ihtsham Haq, MD; Susan Fox-Rosellini, MBA; Stacy Merritt, MA, CCRP; Christian Agudelo, MD; James E. Galvin, MD, MPH; MBRF Trustees

TATJANA RUNDEK, MD, PhD

Professor of Neurology and Public Health Sciences

Evelyn F. McKnight Endowed Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging

Director of the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute

Executive Vice Chair of Research and Faculty Affairs in Neurology

Director, Clinical Translational Research Division

Director, MS in Clinical Translational Investigation

Director, University of Miami CTSI K12 Program

Director, NIA T32 Program in AD/ABRD

Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami

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March 18, 2025

RE: 2024 Annual Progress Report

TO: McKnight Brain Research Foundation Trustees

Dear Trustees,

Thank you for the detailed and positive letter in response to our Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute (EMBI) annual report. I am proud of our research initiatives, collaborations, scientific and educational achievements and am grateful for your acknowledgement of them.

We will continue to focus on maintaining the caliber of leadership Dr. Sacco established for our EMBI. Working with Associate Directors, Drs. Levin and Haq and Educational Director, Dr. Agudelo, and our team, we will accomplish the remaining tasks to complete our 5-year strategic plan in 2025.

I appreciate the Trustees' recognition of our hard work and efforts to obtain grants. Considering the new direction of federal grant funding, our EMBI will strive to endure with current and future NIH grants and challenges. This includes the tremendous collaboration with the University of Arizona EMBI on the U19 PAN (Precision Aging Network) project as well as collaborations with other research groups in the nation (UC Davis, University of Chicago, Columbia University, and others).

Scientific research results are elucidating the challenges of isolating the effects of age-related cognitive decline and memory loss from common aging conditions such as vascular aging that affect cognition. Considering all factors, our EMBI will continue to make great efforts to achieve the goals of the MBRF. I know our EMBI will thrive with Dr. Romano as department chair and under the new University of Miami leadership.

As of now, our Institution is not significantly affected by the new NIH mission as we are not on the list of 60 universities marked for review. However, we do expect challenges in conducting research if the NIH indirect cost changes to the proposed 15% from our current 53.5%. In this case, the effects would be devastating for research infrastructure and resources, including support for research imaging, Core laboratories, research space, administrative grant management and support, and other research and educational activities.

Our EMBI is excited to host the 16th Inter-institutional Meeting and to see all of you in Miami in May. With your continued support and encouragement, our team is poised to continue our work to advance the MBRF research initiatives leading to preserving memory and enhancing life through brain health. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tatjana Rundek, MD, PhD, Director of University of Miami EMBI
Evelyn F. McKnight Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging

CC: Amy Porter; Bonnie Levin, PhD; Ihtsham Haq, MD; Christian Agudelo, MD; James E. Galvin, MD, MPH; Susan Fox-Rosellini, MBA; Stacy Merritt, MA, CCRP



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

EVELYN F. McKNIGHT
BRAIN INSTITUTE



Joe Echevarria the 7th UM president

UM Business Admin degree
CEO of Deloitte LLP, global chief exec
UM Board of Trustees (2012-19)
CEO UHealth (2020-24)

<https://president.miami.edu/about/index.html>

UM Institutional Updates



Guillermo Willy Prado

Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

UM PhD (2005)
UM Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
UM Dean of the Graduate School

<https://people.miami.edu/profile/92d9bc3613a1c7eb390af512ab416e65>

UM100
April 8, 1925 -



UM Updates

MSOM Strategic Plan Investment

- Neuroscience
- Aging
- Computational Biology



Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A.
Dean & Chief Academic Officer



Stephen D. Nimer, M.D.
*Executive Dean
for Research*



Olveen Carrasquillo, M.D., MPH
Multi-PI & Co-Director

Erin Kobetz, Ph.D., MPH
Multi-PI & Co-Director

**K12 Career Development Program
MS Clinical Translat Investigation
Tatjana Rundek, M.D., Ph.D.**
Multi-PI & Director



New Chair of Neurology

Jose Romano, M.D.
Professor and Chairman of Neurology
Chief of Service, Neurology, Jackson Health System
JMH/UM since internship/residency (1992-)





UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
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EVELYN F. McKNIGHT
BRAIN INSTITUTE

UM EMBI ORG CHART

ADMIN CORE

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Research Administration
Susan Fox Rosellini
Executive Director Engagement
and Business Administration

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Bonnie Levin, PhD, Associate Director
Ihtsham Ul Haq, MD, Associate Director

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William Scott, PhD
David Loewenstein PhD, ABPP/CN

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Kunjan Dave, PhD
Ami Raval, PhD

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Christian Camargo, MD
Digna Cabral, Project Manager
Angela Dawson, Study
Coordinator
Melanie Taylor-John, Study
Coordinator
Botogoz Aimagambetova,
MD, Research Scientist

NEUROCOGNITIVE

Bonnie Levin, PhD
Sonya Kaur, PhD
Katalina McInerney,
PhD

NEUROIMAGING

Ihtsham Ul Haq, MD
Taylor Ariko, PhD
Yusen Wu, PhD

BIostatistics & Bioinformatics

Hannah Gardener, PhD; Emir Veledar, PhD

EDUCATION CORE & ENGAGEMENT

EDUCATION & MENTORSHIP

Christian Agudelo, MD
Education Director
Nicole Sur, MD
Neurocognitive Scholar

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Susan Fox Rosellini
Executive Director
Engagement and Business
Administration
Marti Flothmann,
Digital Media Manager

NEURO PATH

Xiaoyan Sun, MD
Director Brain Bank
Regina Vontell, PhD
David Davis, PhD

Members

Collaborators



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BRAIN INSTITUTE

EMBI STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



Four Major Objectives:

Objective 1. Develop Scientific Program Directly Related to our Mission

Objective 2. Education & Mentorship

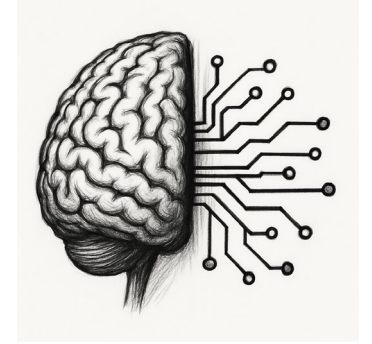
Objective 3. Promote Communication & Collaboration

Objective 4. Community Outreach

Year 4 Accomplishments by Objectives:

- 1..** Over 20 funded projects (U19, P30, R01s, Ks/Fs, FL DOH, EMBI pilots)
- 2..** 8 scholars funded (4 MDs, 2PhDs, 1MD/PhD, 1 PhD in BME)
- 3..** Collaborative research & training grants (with other EMBIs, T32s, K12s)
- 4..** Established networks of clinics, community centers, library system, social media

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



- Why we're doing this, and why now
 - **Goal:** AI can detect patterns in datasets of aging and cognitive change that are too cumbersome otherwise
 - AI isn't just large language models – machine learning approaches are germane to all data modalities (imaging, video, biomarkers)
- In collaboration with the **Frost Institute for Data Science & Computing**
- Leveraging an experienced team
- In order to:
 - Automate biomarker extraction
 - Identify risk factors
 - Predict cognitive change
 - Create a clinical to research pipeline



Dr. Yelena Yesha
Professor



Dr. Yusen Wu
Assistant Professor



Dr. Phuong Nguyen
Assistant Professor

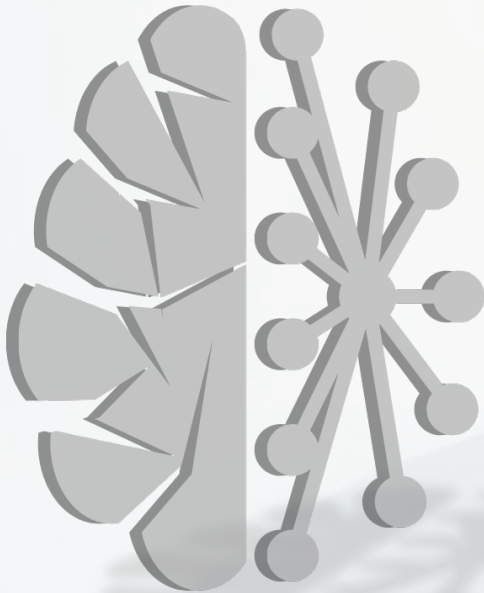


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TRAINING & EDUCATION HIGHLIGHT

RESEARCH AND CLINICAL EDUCATION

- McKnight MD/PhD **Students**
- T32 **Post-Doctorate Fellows**
- McKnight **Clinical Translational Fellow**
- McKnight Neurocognitive **Scholar**
- **McKnight Neurology Resident Training in Cognitive Neurology (new curriculum)**





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EMBI INVESTMENT STRATEGY



PEOPLE

STRATEGIC
RECRUITMENT OF
SCIENTISTS WITH
INTEREST IN BRAIN
AGING AND AGE-
RELATED MEMORY
LOSS ACROSS
DISCIPLINES AND
TRAINING LEVELS



SHARED TECHNOLOGY & EXPERTISE

NEUROIMAGING DEDICATED
TO RESEARCH IN MED

BIO-INFORMATICS, BIG DATA
STORAGE AND MANAGEMENT



TRAINING & EDUCATION

INVESTING IN
EDUCATION BRAIN

SCHOLARSHIPS)
AND PILOTS



SPACE!

ADEQUATE SPACE
FOR CLINICAL



IMPROVEMENT OF ALL INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS

ORA, ETC.

ALL ON PAUSE !

**Invest in
Science and
Technology**