

@UlowaNeuro Notes

September 2020

Today I am launching a new monthly newsletter in an effort to keep us connected and informed. I'll share the exciting things happening in the INI, celebrating our individual and collective successes and offering thoughts on our goals and direction as an institute. I'm thrilled to start by telling you about some of our new colleagues, joining us this fall in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Pharmacy and College of Medicine. This broad collaboration across departments and colleges is a hallmark of the INI.

Together with the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, we welcome three new assistant professors, Bengi Baran, Dorit Kliemann and James Traer. Dr. Baran's research seeks to understand the role of sleep in symptoms and cognitive deficits in psychiatric disorders. She joins us from Harvard Medical School, Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Kliemann studies the neuroscience of human social behavior, from a basic research perspective, as well as in its applications to disorders (e.g., autism) and neurological populations (e.g., brain lesions). She completed her postdoctoral work at the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT. Dr. Traer seeks quantitative models which "hear the world like a human", that is, models which explain and predict human behavior in ecologically relevant listening tasks. He also was at MIT, in the Computational Audition Laboratory, before coming to Iowa.

No stranger to the INI, Marie Gainé transitioned from research scientist in my lab to assistant professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Science and Experimental Therapeutics in July. She will continue her excellent work on the role of epigenetics in the development and treatment of psychiatric disorders, and the influence of environmental factors.

Also in July, Stephanie Gantz opened her lab in the Department of Molecular Physiology and Biophysics where she is working to discover and characterize novel interactions between G protein-coupled receptors and ion channels in the brain. She completed postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard Medical School (Bean Lab) and the National Institutes of Health.

Looking ahead, we will welcome our newest hire Jon Resch, in January 2021, to the Department of Neuroscience and Pharmacology. A Midwest native, the prospect of moving into an Iowa winter doesn't scare him. He will wrap up his postdoctoral work in the Lowell Lab at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center this fall. His research, including collaboration with Joel Geerling in INI and Neurology, employs neuroscience and genetic tools to study how the brain regulates appetite and metabolism. His work will also intersect with our colleagues in the Fraternal Order of Eagles Diabetes Research Center, a testament to our INI mantra that "the best ideas come from collaboration."

It's a tricky business to move across country and launch your first lab in the middle of a global pandemic. A few of our new faculty also jumped feet first into a new paradigm in recruitment as interviews pivoted to all virtual format in March. It's clear this will be with us for many months to come and may even permanently alter the way recruitment happens in the academy. Kumar Narayanan and I will lead a discussion about interviewing virtually in a noon seminar for the UI Postdoc Association tomorrow, Sept 25. Please join us—how else?—on [Zoom](#).