

One of the best parts of my role as Director of the Iowa Neuroscience Institute is notifying our faculty and trainees that the INI is awarding them funds to support their research. We have the resources to offer these awards because of philanthropists who believe in our work and mission.



Two of these benefactors are Sue and Frank Cannon, whose gift established the Williams-Cannon Faculty Fellowships in 2019 to fund neurodegeneration research. Just last week, I sent award notices to **Bengi Baran** (Psychological and Brain Sciences) and **Jyoti Chatterjee** (Neuroscience and Pharmacology.) Bengi investigates the impact of aging and neurodegeneration in major psychiatric disorders, and Jyoti is working to uncover the molecular basis of neurodegeneration.

Awards like these in the early years as a faculty member are crucial in building a strong, creative program that advances our understanding of brain science. These awards also help us to build relationships and community, which is vital for the overall success of the INI.



Like the previous Williams-Cannon Fellows, Bengi and Jyoti will have opportunities over the next year to meet with Sue and Frank Cannon to share updates about their research, which helps our donors understand the immediate and tangible impact of their gift. Our faculty members' enthusiasm for what they are doing always comes through.



Awards like these also help to build relationships within the INI as the fellowship winners become more closely connected to our larger research effort and, in some cases, use the award to support trainees, involving students and postdocs more directly in our collaborative community. Each year, the new awardees become part of the network of Williams-Cannon Fellows, all of whom continue to be engaged in the critical work of unraveling the mysteries of neurodegeneration. We have also been able to support work that started in other disciplines but has clear implications and application for neuroscience, such as **Alejandro Pezzulo's** (internal medicine) work in disease susceptibility.

I am so grateful to Sue and Frank Cannon and the many donors who support our efforts to build a collaborative community focused on discovering the causes of — and preventions, treatments, and cures for — the many diseases that affect the brain and nervous system.