

@UlowaNeuro Notes

April 2025

A rewarding part of my job leading the Iowa Neuroscience Institute is seeing members of our collaborative community identify an opportunity and work together to build something new. I wrote [last summer](#) about two of our early career faculty members creating a Grants Club to provide peer feedback on grants in progress.

This month I am excited about the energy in our Neuroscience Interest Group, founded by two postdoctoral scholars and one research associate. I am grateful to **Val Botero**, **Anneke Knauss**, and **Pratyush Suryavanshi** for taking the initiative to create a space that fosters community. The Neuroscience Interest Group is open to everyone and offers opportunities to present research, discuss science, and offer mutual support along this scientific career path.



Some of the Neuroscience Interest Group members have found a common interest in being more intentional about building community among postdocs. Postdoctoral fellows are critically important to research and discovery in the INI. This stage is such an exciting and critical time in scientific training, when you identify important questions and approaches that lay the foundation for an entire career. But the unstructured nature of this period of training can sometimes leave people feeling alone.

I look forward to joining the group at the next meeting, May 15, 4 p.m. 5289 CBRB, to listen and discuss the issues most on the minds of our postdocs. I want to hear your ideas about how the INI can best support this vital community.

One new initiative is our INI Postdoctoral Travel Awards, with our first four recipients announced this week. Congratulations to **Yaneri Ayala**, **Budhaditya Basu**, **Pedro Ogallar**, and **Pratyush Suryavanshi**. We are happy to support you as you share your work with the wider professional community through travel to national conferences to present your research.

This fall we will sponsor a small group of postdocs to attend the annual [Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops](#), hosted on campus Oct 9, 2025. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance writing skills and increase competitiveness for external research funding to support your career growth. Postdocs should watch for an email this summer about how to apply.

Even as we navigate this period of uncertainty in academic science, I want to encourage us all to remain focused on our goals of discovery and connection. Our postdocs are driven by an insatiable curiosity and buoyed by boundless creativity, neither of which can be diminished by outside forces.

The INI has a track record of successful postdoctoral training, with numerous postdocs securing independent positions in academia and industry. Their success is a great example for current and future trainees and has created a network of collaborators across a diverse array of neuroscience research areas. I am committed to working together to ensure the INI is a destination for postdoctoral training.

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